COMPLETE POEMS

OF

Isabel Ecclestone Mackay

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Counsel
and Other Poems

Marguerite de Roberval

The Passing of Cadieux

(Poems of Isabel Ecclestone Mackay not hitherto published in Book Form)

This edition of "The Complete Poems of Isabel Ecclestone Mackay" is limited to five hundred and thirty-six copies of which this is Number

400

THE COMPLETE POEMS *of* ISABEL ECCLESTONE MACKAY

Thomas J. Bata Libra
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THIS VOLUME includes the poems of Isabel Ecclestone Mackay not hitherto published in book form, among which are *Marguerite de Roberval* and *The Passing of Cadieux,* the prize-winning poems in two of the annual Historical Poem Contests conducted by *The Globe* (Toronto). The publishers desire to express their thanks to *The Globe* for permission to include these poems.

Combined with these new poems there is the complete text of the previously published books: *The Fires of Driftwood,* and *The Shining Ship and Other Verse* (new enlarged edition). This volume, therefore, comprises the complete poetical works of Isabel Ecclestone Mackay, and the edition is limited to an issue of 536 copies.

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Counsel

I AM hardly afraid—
But I wonder if you,
Who have lived in the world so much longer than I,
Would give me the lift of a good word or two,
As it were,
Passing by?

For life has a way,
Upsetting to some,
Of leaving her problems all over the scene
And then just pretending to be deaf and dumb
When you ask
What they mean—

And there's this about words—
Be they knowledge or guess--
They roam through the mind with a life of their own
And, meeting them sometimes in moments of stress,
One finds
They have grown.

At Thought of Hills

AT thought of hills where streams begin
And little rills foregather
I'd leave this fishing in the sea
And go to seek them rather—
For seas are terrible lone things,
The gulls scream so....and the salt stings.

I've bits of gear that's mine to leave,
Nor lack I for a penny,
And what it is I'd go to seek
I know no more than any....
But maybe, up beyond, I'd find
A little hill....to ease my mind.

Uncharted

WHERE shall I turn when gardener Day
Has closed earth's ordered garden walks—
The world outside is all astray,
And the Night talks?

I've seen a wistful face, wind blown,
Flit through the darkness past the bars.
Would it have lingered, had it known
Of friendlier stars?

I would there were some traveller's tale
Of this or that to ponder on,
Some echo as of nightingale
Or lark at dawn.

I ask but what a stranger may,
A moss-grown stone or weathered sign,
Or footprint pointing down the way
That must be mine.

How pleasant if a friend should say,
"The evening air blows sudden chill.
I'll join you, since I go your way!"
But no one will.

If I Had a Ring

IF I had a ring
That had three wishes in it,
I'd find those three wishes
No trouble at all—
But if *one* wish were there
And my choosing must win it
Why, the choice I'd be choosing
I don't know at all!

'Twould be fine to be rich
But I'd like to have beauty,
While health is a good wish
That's lucky for all—
To be asking for goodness
Is maybe a duty—
There's four things I've thought
With no thinking at all.

So had I a ring
With one wish for my choosing,
What with health, wealth and beauty
And goodness and all
I'd be so taken up
With the gifts I'd be losing
That the wish I would wish
Would be no wish at all!

Three Meetings

I MET with Life one day at dawn
And carelessly we wandered on—
He seemed a comrade never tired—
We built a city many-spired,
We knew green fields and copses sweet,
We knew the road in mid-day heat,
We knew a hundred singing streams
And fished their shining pools for dreams.

I met with Love one day at noon—
I had not thought to meet Love soon—
He looked upon my spired town
And all its towers fell softly down.
His face lay mirrored in the stream
And shadow-pale grew every dream—
For I had but to look on Love
To know what dreams are fashioned of!

I met with Death one day at dusk—
Beneath the flat moon's empty husk
She looked on me, and in her face
I seemed some lost delight to trace.
"And do I know you, Death?" I cried—
All chill, she turned and walked beside—
"Love is my mate and Life my child,
Their friends are mine," said Death, and
smiled.

Eve, On a Morning

EVE, on a morning, paused before the Gate—
The angel with the sword had long been gone,
Naught save a swaying creeper kept the bar
That night had hung her silver nets upon—

Parting the living screen, the woman stood
And gazed upon that lost and lovely land;
No voice forbade, only a little wind,
Sighing, laid a soft rose-leaf on her hand.

Morning was there while still the cool of night
Lay greenly cupped in shallow valleys where
Gay plumage lit the shadow with faint fire
And limned with beauty the slow-moving air.

The little pool? Tall reeds had robbed its marge
Whereby a solitary heron dipped,
The once-trod paths were high with plumey grass
Through whose grey depths a gleaming leopard slipped.

Her long gaze hurried down the pillared trees,
  Past transepts of dim silence, sweetly chill,
Until it rested with an old content
  Upon the sudden glory of a hill.

Here in lost days the sun came like a king
  And wind and flowers swayed in endless games.
While all the shy new beasts stood patient by
  What time they came to Adam for their names.

Beyond the hill—but why again pursue
  That unreturning anguish of delight
When from ferned covert she and Adam peered
  And watched their first moon climb into the night—

A moment so Eve stood—then let the vine
  Fall swinging from her hand and turned away—
"The children will be waking now," she thought,
  "And Adam plans to break new ground to-day."

Samples

GIVE me not all—this severed bit
With tracings of the pattern—see,
My weaving mind shall fashion it
Into the beauty meant to be.

Let the fog clear and close again
Hiding that far and perfect view,
So may I with creative pain
Build up the lovely thing anew.

Say not too much—a half-formed word,
Stirring the heart, may hold it long
And echoes, lost as soon as heard,
Ring clearer than the finished song.

Sip lightly—be not over keen
To drink life's gathered sweetness up.
Eyes lose their dreaming that have seen
The bottom of an empty cup!

Helen---Old

Child:

GREAT lady, were you Helen long ago?
And were you beautiful as all men say?

Helen:

Yea, child, my name was Helen....I think so...
Helen?....I thought of her but yesterday.

Child:

There was a song of Helen...."World's Delight,"
It names her "Heaven Fair" and "Rose Divine."

Helen:

A song?...."Tis true one sang to me by night
Of Helen's eyes—what color, child, are mine?

Child:

No color, lady. Tell me of that host,
So splendid brave, who fought before Troy's town.

Helen:

A host of shadows, child....ghost locked with ghost....
Blows falling light as sea-mist drifting down....

Child:

Tell of that day which saw great Hector die,
Dragged in the dust beneath the echoing gate!

Helen:

Hector!...was that his name? I often try
To fit the names....they slip and change of late....

Child:

But, lady, you were Helen....tell but one
Of those famed battles joined to make you free!

Helen:

All battles are the same when they are done....
But Helen, once saw moonlight on the sea....

Child:

Then tell me of the happy vows you paid
When you returned—the crowds, the pageantry!

Helen:

Returned, you say?...Returned? But Helen stayed
In Troy....I know....Cease, Child—you trouble me!

Temptation

HE stood upon the height and saw
The glory of a waking world
Along whose delicate, high peaks
The rosy tips of dawn uncurled.

Such loveliness was there, such peace,
Such silver rivers singing by,
Such golden plenty on the plain,
Such sweet smoke homing toward the sky—

Did heavenly meadows grow more fair
Than these where meek-eyed cattle trod?
Might man more easy anywhere
Come nearer to the smile of God?

Yet, as He gazed, with laggard step
Man's sad processional crept by.
Its troubled murmur rose and filled
The dawn-clear temple of the sky.

"Though earth be bountiful they faint,
Though morn be beautiful they die."
So whispered Satan, while the wind
Shrilled with a far and bitter cry.

Temptation

And suddenly the Master saw
His Kingdom come—not far away
Through anguished years, but near and plain—
Sad man made happy in a day!

"These be Thy people," Satan spoke.
"Wilt Thou not bring them peace, great Lord?"—
What sigh was that which heaven heard?
"Not peace, O Satan, but a sword!"

Summons

WHY am I changed?
I had not known
A face could dull so quick to grey—
This line....this sharpened bone....
Things to be hid away!

I think a stranger passed me in the night,
There was wind in my hair....
My heart beat sudden, large and light,
I cried, "Who's there?"....

I think of yesterday
And it is strange....
I must have lost the key
That made it possible and part of me....

I think of friends....my hands
With timid touch a friendly hand enfold—
What fantasy is this?.. I do not know
Whose hand it is I hold!

Thin and diffused as light
And unfamiliar as a stranger's face
Is earth's warm ring—
Distant am I as any star in space
From living thing—

Summons

Voices may echo,
Lips may touch and cling,
Hands tremble to bestow—
But never yet has soul companioned soul
The way I go!

Outgoing

I WHO have loved the wind,
Out on the wind I go—
Swept by its great unrest
Into a peace unguessed,
I who have loved the wind
Find it forever kind.

I who have loved the rain,
Down with the rain I go—
Deep in the sweet, brown earth,
Quick with the pulse of birth,
I who have loved the rain
Press its cool lips again.

I who have loved the sun,
Round with the sun I go—
Pass as the ages pass,
Breaths on a clearing glass,
I who have loved the sun
Follow a day that's done.

Marguerite de Roberval

(Winner of the Toronto *Globe* Prize in 1907, for best Canadian Historical Poem.)

O, THE long days and nights! The days that bring
No sunshine that my shrinking soul can bear,
The nights that soothe not. All the airs of France.
Soft and sun-steeped, that once were breath of life,
Now stir no magic in me. I could weep—
Yet can I never weep—to see the land
That is my land no more! For where the soul
Doth dwell and the heart linger there
Alone can be the native land, and I have left
Behind me one small spot of barren earth
That is my hold on heav'n!

You bid me tell
My story? That were hard. I have no art
And all my words have long been lost amid
The greater silences. The birds—they knew
My grief, nor did I feel the need of speech
To make my woe articulate to the wind!
If my tale halts, know 'tis the want of words
And not the want of truth.

'Twas long, you say—
Yes, yet at first it seemed not long. We watched
The ships recede, nor vexed them with a prayer.
Was not his arm about me? Did he not
Stoop low to whisper in my tingling ear?
The little Demon-island was our world,
So all the world was ours——no brighter sphere
That swung into our ken in purple heaven
Was half so fair a world! We were content.
Was he not mine? And I (he whispered this)
The only woman on love's continent!
How can I tell my story? Would you care
To hear of those first days? I cannot speak
Of them—they lie asleep so soft within
My heart a word would wake them. I'll not speak
That word!

There came at last a golden day
When in my arms I held mine own first born,
And my new world held three. And then I knew,
Mid joy so great, a passion of despair!
I knew our isle was barren, girt with foam
And torn with awful storm. I knew the cold,
The bitter, cruel cold! My tender babe,

Marguerite de Roberval

What love could keep him warm? Beside my couch
Pale famine knelt with outstretched, greedy hand,
To snatch my treasure from me. Ah, I knew,
I knew what fear was then!

We fought it back,
That ghost of chill despair. He whom I loved
Fought bravely, as a man must fight who sees
His wife and child defenceless. But I knew—
E'en from the first—the unequal strife would prove
Too long, the fear too keen! It wore his strength,
And in his eyes there grew the look of one
Who grapples time, and will not let it go,
Yet feels it slipping, slipping—
Ah, my dear!
I saw you die, and could not help or save—
Knowing myself to be the awful care
That weighed thee to thy grave!

The world held two
Now—one so frail and small, and one made strong
By love and weak by fear. That little life!
It trembled in my arms like some small flame
Of candle in a stealthy draught that blows

And blows again—one never knows
from whence,
Yet feareth always—till at last, at last
A darkness falls! So came the dark to me—
And it was night indeed!

Beside my love
I laid my lovely babe. And all fear fled;
For where joy is there only can fear be.
They fear not who have nothing left to fear!

So! That is all my tale. I lived, I live
And shall live on, no doubt. The changeful
sky
Is blue in France, and I am young—think you
I am still young! Though joy has come and
passed
And I am gazing after with dull eyes!

One day there came a sail. It drew anear
And found me on my island, all alone—
That island that had once held all the world—
They succored me and brought me back again
To sunny France, and here I falter through
This halting tale of mine. And now 'tis told
I pray you speak to me of it no more!
If I would sleep o' nights my ears must close
To that sad sound of waves upon the beach,
To that sad sound of wind that waileth so!

Marguerite de Roberval

To visions of the sun upon the sea
And green grass-covered mounds, bleak, bleak, but still
With early flowers clustering here and there!

Historical Note.—When the Sieur de Roberval, appointed Viceroy of Canada by Francis I., sailed for his new possessions, he took with him his niece, the lovely and high-spirited Marguerite de Roberval. A cavalier of Picardy, who loved her, but was too poor to ask her hand in marriage, joined the company as a volunteer, but on the voyage out the affection of the young people was discovered by de Roberval, who was so enraged that he devised a terrible punishment. Near Newfoundland was a solitary island, called the Isle of Demons, because of the strange wailings of the wind over the rocks, and here Marguerite was abandoned. Her lover, however, succeeded in escaping his guards and swam to shore. They built such shelter as they could, and this is the first European family home of which we know in Canada. After some years Marguerite was rescued by a fishing boat and restored to France but not until both husband and child were dead. The foregoing poem contains her story, told by herself, upon her arrival in France.

The Passing of Cadieux

(Winner of the Toronto *Globe* Prize, in 1909, for Best Canadian Historical Poem.)

THAT man is brave who at the nod of Fate
Will lay his life a willing offering down,
That they who loved him may know length of days;
May stay awhile upon this pleasant earth
Drinking its gladness and its vigor in,
Though he himself lie silent evermore,
Dead to the gentle calling of the Spring,
Dead to the warmth of Summer, wrapt in dream
So deep, so far, that never dreamer yet
Has waked to tell his dream. Men there may be
Who, careless of its worth, toss life away,
A counter in some feverish game of chance,
Or, stranger yet, will sell it day by day
For toys to play with; But a man who knows
The love of life and holds it dear and good,
Prizing each moment, yet will let it go
That others still may keep the precious thing—
He is the truly brave!

This did Cadieux,
A man who loved the wild and held each day
A gift from Le Bon Dieu to fill with joy
And offer back again to Him who gave.
(See, now Messieurs, his grave! We hold it dear.)
The story you have heard—but no? 'Tis strange,
For we all know the story of Cadieux!
He was a Frenchman born. One of an age
That glitters like a gem in history yet,
The Golden Age of France! 'Twould seem, Messieurs,
That every country has a Golden Age?—
Ah well, ah well!—

But this Cadieux, he came
No one knew whence, nor cared, indeed, to know.
His simple coming seemed to bring the day,
So strong was he, so gallant and so gay—
A maker of sweet songs; with voice so clear
'Twas like the call of early-soaring bird
Hymning the sunrise; so at least 'twould seem
Mehwatta thought—the slim Algonquin girl
Whose shy black eyes the singer loved to praise.
She taught him all the soft, full-throated words

With which the Indian warriors woo
their brides,
And he taught her the dainty phrase of France
And made her little songs of love, like this;

"Fresh is love in May
When the Spring is yearning,
Life is but a lay,
Love is quick in learning.

"Sweet is love in June:
All the roses blowing
Whisper 'neath the moon
Secrets for love's knowing.

"Sweet is love alway
When life burns to embers,
Hearts keep warm for aye
With what love remembers!"

Their wigwam rose beside the Calumet
Where the great waters thunder day and night
And dawn chased dawn away in gay content.
Then it so chanced, when many moons were
spent,
The brave Cadieux and his brown brothers
rose
To gather up their wealth of furs for trade;
And in that moment Fate upraised her hand

And, wantonly, loosed Death upon the trail,
Red death and terrible—the Iroquois!
(Oh, the long cry that rent the startled dawn!)
One way alone remained, if they would live—
The Calumet, the cataract—perchance
The good Saint Anne might help!

"In God's name, go!
Push off the great canoe, Mehwatta, go!—
Adieu, petite Mehwatta! Keep good cheer.
Say thou a prayer; beseech the good Saint Anne!—
For two must stay behind to hold the way,
And shall thy husband fail in time of need?
And would Mehwatta's eyes behold him shamed?—
Adieu!"—Oh, swift the waters bear them on!
Now the good God be merciful! . . . .
. . . . . They stayed
Cadieux and one Algonquin, and they played
With a bewildered foe, as children play,
Crying "Lo, here am I!" and then "Lo here!"
"Lo, there!"
Their muskets spoke from everywhere at once—
So swift they ran behind the friendly trees,
They seemed a host with Death for General
And the fierce foe fell back.

But ere they went
Their wingéd vegeance found the Algonquin's heart.
Cadieux was left alone!

Ah, now, brave soul,
Began the harder part! To wander through
The waking woods, stern hunger for a guide;
To see new life and know that he must die;
To hear the Spring and know she breathed "Adieu"!
. . . One wonders what strange songs the forest heard?
What poignant cry rose to the lonely skies
To die in music somewhere far above
Or fall in sweetness back upon the earth—
The requiem of that singer of sweet songs!

They found him—so—with cross upon his heart,
His cold hand fast upon this last Complaint—

"Ends the long trail—at sunset I must die!
I sing no more—O little bird, sing on
And flash bright wing against a brighter sky!

"Sing to my Dear, as once I used to sing;
Say that I guarded love and kept the faith—
Fly to her, little bird, on swifter wing.

"The world slips by, the sun drops down
to-night—
Sweet Mary, comfort me, and let it be
Thine arms that hold me when I wake to
light!"

Historical Note.—In the early days there came to the region of the Upper Ottawa—to Allumette and Calumet—a voyageur by the name of Cadieux. He was more than an ordinary adventurer, for not only could he fight and hunt with the most expert, but he could make sweet songs, words and music, and sing them, too, in a way that was good to hear. So thought, at any rate, a pretty Indian maiden of the Algonquin Ottawas, whom he won for his wife. Their wigwam stood near to the Great Fall of the Calumet. After a season's hunting Cadieux and his Indian friends were preparing to go to Montreal with their accumulation of furs, when of a sudden, the alarm was given of the approach, through the woods, of a war party of their deadly enemies, the Iroquois. There was but one means of escape. The canoe was to be committed to the cataract, while someone stayed behind to hold the Iroquois at bay. Cadieux and a single Algonquin remained. The Iroquois finally withdrew, but not before the Algonquin was killed. Cadieux, left alone, wandered for a time in the woods until he became exhausted, returning at last to Petit-Rocher, and, feeling his end approach, he made for himself a grave, and set up a rustic cross to sanctify his departure. His friends, returning to search for him, found him lying there, partly covered with leaves and branches, the cross beside him, and his hands closed on his last song "La Complainte de Cadieux."

The Lament is still sung by the French-Canadians, and the grave of Cadieux is still an object of veneration.

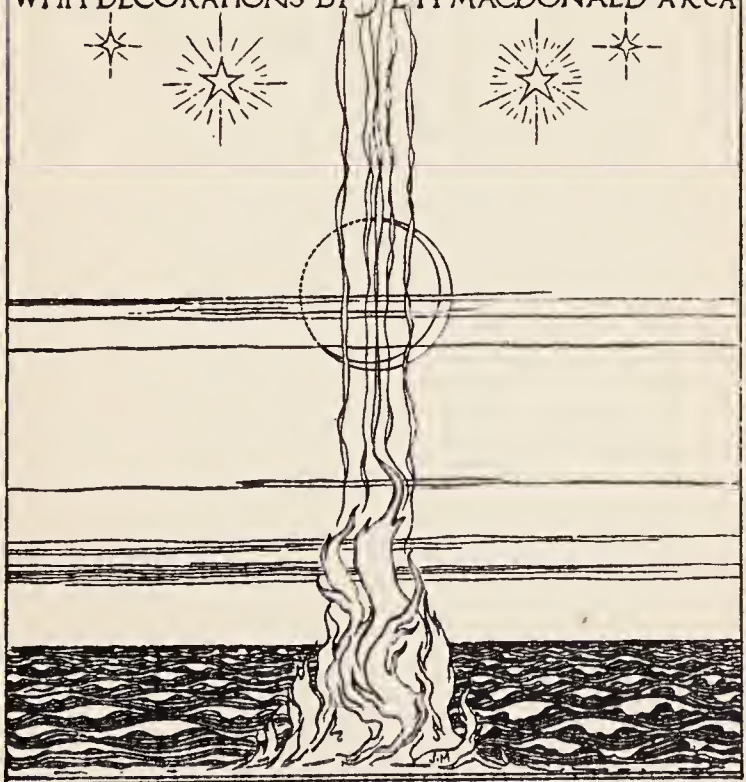
Fires of Driftwood

by Isabel Ecclestone Mackay

FIRES OF DRIFT WOOD

BY ISABEL ECCLESTONE MACKAY

WITH DECORATIONS BY J·E·H·MACDONALD A·R·C·A·



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Fires of Driftwood

Fires of Driftwood

ON what long tides
Do you drift to my fire,
You waifs of strange waters?
From what far seas,
What murmurous sands,
What desolate beaches—
Flotsam of those glories that were ships!

I gather you,
Bitter with salt,
Sun-bleached, rock-scarred, moon-harried,
Fuel for my fire.

You are Pride's end.
Through all to-morrows you are yesterday.
You are waste,
You are ruin,
For where is that which once you were?

I gather you.
See! I set free the fire within you—
You awake in thin flame!
Tremulous, mistlike, your soul aspires,
Blue, beautiful,
Up and up to the clouds which are its kindred!
What is left is nothing—
Ashes blown along the shore!

When as a Lad

WHEN, as a lad, at break of day
I watched the fishers sail away,
My thoughts, like flocking birds, would follow
Across the curving sky's blue hollow,
And on and on—
Into the very heart of dawn!

For long I searched the world—ah, me!
I searched the sky, I searched the sea,
With much of useless grief and rueing
Those wingéd thoughts of mine pursuing—
So dear were they,
So lovely and so far away!

I seek them still and always must
Until my laggard heart is dust
And I am free to follow, follow,
Across the curving sky's blue hollow,
Those thoughts too fleet
For any save the soul's swift feet!

Laureate

DEATH met a little child who cried
For a bright star which earth denied,
And Death, so sympathetic, kissed it,
Saying: "With me
All bright things be!"—
And only the child's mother missed it.

Death met a maiden on the brae,
Her eyes held dreams life would betray,
And gallant Death was greatly taken—
"Leave," whispered he,
"Your dream with me
And I will see you never waken."

Death met an old man in a lane;
So gnarled was he and full of pain
That kindly Death was struck with pity—
"Come you with me,
Old man," said he,
"I'll set you down in a fair city."

So, kingly Death along the way
Scatters rare gifts and asks no pay—
Yet who to Death will write a sonnet?
If any dare,
Let him take care
No foolish tear be spilled upon it!

Out of Babylon

THEIR looks for me are bitter,
And bitter is their word—
I may not glance behind unseen,
I may not sigh unheard.

So fare we forth from Babylon,
Along the road of stone;
And no one looks to Babylon
Save I—save I alone!

My mother's eyes are glory-filled
(Save when they fall on me)
The shining of my father's face
I tremble when I see,

For they were slaves in Babylon,
And now they're walking free—
They leave their chains in Babylon,
I bear my chains with me!

At night a sound of singing
The vast encampment fills;
"Jerusalem! Jerusalem!"
It sweeps the nearing hills—

But no one sings of Babylon
(Their home of yesterday)
And no one prays for Babylon,
And I—I dare not pray!

Last night the Prophet saw me;
  And, while he held me there,
The holy fire within his eyes
  Burned all my secret bare.

"What! Sigh you so for Babylon?"
  (I turned away my face)
"Here's one who turns to Babylon,
  Heart traitor to her race!"

I follow and I follow!
  My heart upon the rack;
I follow to Jerusalem—
  The long road stretches back

To Babylon, to Babylon!
  And every step I take
Bears farther off from Babylon
  A heart that cannot break.

Last Spring

THIS morning at the door
I heard the Spring.
Quickly I set it wide
And, welcoming,
"Come in, sweet Spring," I cried,
"The winter ash, long dried,
Waits but your breath to rise
On phantom wing."

A brown leaf shivered by,
A soulless thing—
My heart in quick dismay
Forgot to sing—
Twisted and grim it lay,
Kin to the ghost-ash gray,
Dead, dead—strange herald this
Of jocund Spring!

I spurned it from the door.
I longed that Spring
Should come with song and glow
And rush of wing,
Not this, not this!—But O
Dead leaf, a year ago
You were the dear first-born
Of Hope and Spring!

Presence

BY a sense of Presence, keenly
dear,
I, who thought her distant,
Knew her near.

By an echo that most sweetly woke,
I, long keyed to silence,
Knew she spoke.

By her nearness and the word she said,
I, who thought her living,
Knew her dead.

In an Autumn Garden

TO-NIGHT the air discloses
Souls of a million roses,
And ghosts of hyacinths that died too soon;
From Pan's safe-hidden altar
Dim wraiths of incense falter
In waving spiral, making sweet the moon!

Aroused from fragrant covers,
The vows of vanished lovers
Take voice in whisperings that rise and pass;
Where the crisped leaves are lying
A tremulous, low sighing
Breathes like a startled spirit o'er the grass.

Ah, Love! in some far garden,
In Arcady or Arden,
We two were lovers! Hush—remember not
The years in which I've missed you—
'Twas yesterday I kissed you
Beneath this haunted moon! Have you forgot?

Rose Dolores

THE moan of Rose Dolores, she made her plaint to me,
"My hair is lifted by the wind that sweeps in from the sea;
I taste its salt upon my lips—O jailer, set me free!"

"Content thee, Rose Dolores; content thee, child of care!
There's satin shoon upon thy feet and emeralds in thy hair,
And one there is who hungers for thy step upon the stair."

The moan of Rose Dolores, "O jailer, set me free!
These satin shoon and green-lit gems are terrible to me;
I hear a murmur on the wind, the murmur of the sea!"

"Bethink thee, Rose Dolores, bethink thee, ere too late!
Thou wert a fisher's child, alack, born to a fisher's fate;
Would'st lay thy beauty 'neath the yoke—would'st be a fisher's mate?"

Rose Dolores

The moan of Rose Dolores "Kind jailer, let me go!
There's one who is a fisher—ah! my heart beats cold and slow,
Lest he should doubt I love him—I! who love not heaven so!"

"Alas, sweet Rose Dolores, why beat against the bars?
Thy fisher lover drifteth where the sea is full of stars;
Why weep for one who weeps no more?—since grief thy beauty mars!"

The moan of Rose Dolores (she prayed me patiently)
"O jailer, now I know who called from out the calling sea,
I know whose kiss was in the wind—O jailer, set me free!"

A Pilgrim

ACROSS the trodden continent of years
To shrines of long ago,
My heart, a hooded pilgrim, turns with tears—
For could I know
That in the temple of thy constancy
There still may burn a taper lit for me,
'Twould be a star in starless heaven, to show
That Heaven could be.

Bent with the weight of all that I desired
And all that I forswore,
My heart roams, mendicant, forlorn and tired,
From door to door,
Begging of every stern-faced memory
An alms of pity—just to come to thee,
No more thy knight, thy champion no more—
Only thy devotee!

Spring will Come

SPRING will come to help me: she'll be back again,
Back with the soft sun, the sun I knew before.
She will wear her green gown, the emerald gown she wore
When the white-faced windflowers blew along the lane.

Spring will come to help me: When her waking sigh
Drifts across my sore heart all the pain will go.
How shall hearts be aching when larks are flying low,
Low across the fields of camas bluer than the sky?

I've a tryst with Spring here—maybe they'll be few
Now the world grows older—and shall I delay
Just because a Winter has stolen joy away?
What cares Spring for old joys, all her joys are new.

Maybe there'll be singing in my sorrow yet—
I have heard of such things—but, if there be not,
Still there'll be the green pool in the pasture lot,
All a-trail with willow fingers, delicate and wet.

Winter is a passing thing and Spring is always gay;
If she, too, be passing she does not weep to know it.
Time she takes to quicken seed but never time to grow it—
Naught she cares for harvest that lies so far away.

Cosmos

THE tiny thing of painted gauze that flutters in the sun
And sinks upon the breast of night with all its living done;

The unconsidered seed that from the garden blows away,
Blooming its little time to bloom in one short summer day;

The leaf the idle wind shakes down in autumn from the tree,
The grasshopper who for an hour makes gayest minstrelsy—

These—and this restless soul of mine—are one with flaming spheres
And cold, dead moons whose ghostly fires haunt unremembered years.

The Secret

IF I should tell you what I know
Of where the first primroses grow,
Betray the secrets of the lily,
Bring crocus-gold and daffodilly,
Would you tell me if charm there be
To win a maiden, willy-nilly?

I lie upon the fragrant heath,
Kin to the beating heart beneath;
The nesting plover I discover
Nor stir the scented screen above her,
Yet am I blind—I cannot find
What turns a maiden to her lover!

Through all the mysteries of May,
Initiate, I take my way—
Sure as the blithest lark or linnet
To touch the pulsing soul within it—
Yet with no art to reach Her heart,
Nor skill to teach me how to win it!

I Watch Swift Pictures

I WATCH swift pictures flash and fade
On the closed curtains of my eyes,—
A bit of river green as jade
Under green skies;

A single bird that soars and dips
Remote; a young and secret moon
Stealing to kiss some flower's lips
Too shy for noon;

A pointing tree; a lifted hill,
Sun-misted with a golden ring,—
Were these once mine? And am I still
Remembering?

A path that wanders wistfully
With no beginning there nor here,
Nor special grace that it should be
So sharply dear,

Unless,—what if when every day
Is yesterday, with naught to borrow,
I may slip down this wistful way
Into to-morrow?

Fear

I HEARD a sound of crying in the lane,
A passionless, low crying,
And I said, "It is the tears of the brown rain
On the leaves within the lane!"

I heard a sudden sighing at the door,
A soft, persuasive sighing,
And I said, "The summer breeze has sighed before,
Gustily, outside the door!"

Yet from the place I fled, nor came again,
With my heart beating, beating!
For I knew 'twas not the breeze nor the brown rain
At the door and in the lane!

Resurrection

I BURIED Joy; and early to the tomb
I came to weep—so sorrowful was I
Who had not dreamed that Joy, my Joy,
could die.

I turned away, and by my side stood Joy
All glorified—ah, so ashamed was I
Who dared to dream that Joy, my Joy, could
die!

The Lost Name

THE voice of my true love is low
And exquisitely kind,
Warm as a flower, cold as snow—
I think it is the Wind.

My true love's face is white as mist
That moons have lingered on,
Yet rosy as a cloud, sun-kissed—
I think it is the Dawn.

The breath of my true love is sweet
As gardens at day's close
When dew and dark together meet—
I think it is a Rose.

My true love's heart is wild and shy
And folded from my sight,
A world, a star, a whispering sigh—
I think it is the Night.

My true love's name is lost to me,
The prey of dusty years,
But in the falling Rain I see
And know her by her tears!

The Happy Traveller

WHO is the monarch of the Road?
I, the happy rover!
Lord of the way which lies before
Up to the hill and over—
Owner of all beneath the blue,
On till the end, and after, too!

I am the monarch of the Road!
Mine are the keys of morning,
I know where evening keeps her store
Of stars for night's adorning,
I know the wind's wild will, and why
The lone thrush hurries down the sky!

I am the monarch of the Road!
My court I hold with singing,
Each bird a gay ambassador,
Each flower a censer, swinging;
And every little roadside thing
A wonder to confound a king.

I am the monarch of the Road!
I ask no leave for living;
I take no less, I seek no more
Than nature's fullest giving—
And ever, westward with the day,
I travel to the far away!

The Dead Bride

WITHIN my circled arm she lay and
faintly smiled the long night
through,
And oh, but she was fair to view,
fair to view!

Upon the whiteness of her robe the dew dis-
tilled, and on her veil
And on her cheek of carvéd pearl that
gleamed so pale.

(How still the air is in the night, how near
and kind the heavens are,
One might a naked hand outstretch and grasp
a star!)

I kissed her heavy, folded hair. I kissed her
heavy lids full oft;
Beneath the shining of the stars her eyes
shone soft.

"Love, Love!" I said, "the day was long"—
"Oh, long indeed," she sighing said.
"I grow so jealous of the sun, since I am
dead."

(How sweet the air is in the night, how sweet,
sweet, sweet the flowers seem—
But oh, the emptiness of dawn that breaks
the dream!)

The Crocus Bed

YELLOW as the noonday sun,
Purple as a day that's done,
White as mist that lingers pale
On the edge of morning's veil,
Delicate as love's first kiss—
Crocuses are just like this.

Ere the robin paints his breast,
Ere the daffodil is drest,
Ere the iris' lovely head
Waves above her perfumed bed
Comes the crocus—and the Spring
Follows after, wing on wing!

Sweet perfection, holding up
Magic dew in topaz cup,
Alabaster, amethyst—
Curling lips which Earth has kissed,
Folded hearts where secrets hide,
Secrets old when Eve was bride!

Beauty's soul was born with wings,
Flight inspires all lovely things—
Would you gather rainbow fire?
See the rose of dawn's desire
Turn to ash beneath the moon?—
Crocuses must leave us soon.

The Vision

"O SISTER, sister, from the casement leaning,
What sees thy trancéd eye, what is the meaning
Of the strange rapture that thy features know?"
"I see," she said, "the sunset's crimson glow."

"O sister, sister, from the casement turning,
What saw'st thou there save sunset's sullen burning?
—Thy hand is ice, and fever lights thine eye!"
"I saw," she said, "the twilight drifting by."

"O sister, oft the sun hath set and often
Have we beheld the twilight fold and soften
The edge of day— In this no mystery lies!"
"I saw," she said, "the crescent moon arise."

O sister, speak! I fear when on me falleth
Thine empty glance which some wild spell enthralleth!
—How chill the air blows through the open door!"
"I saw," she said, "I saw"—and spake no more.

The Miracle

THERE'S not a leaf upon the tree
To show the sap is leaping,
There's not a blade and not an ear
Escaped from winter's keeping—
But there's a something in the air
A something here, a something there,
A restless something everywhere—
A stirring in the sleeping!

A robin's sudden, thrilling note!
And see—the sky is bluer!
The world, so ancient yesterday,
To-day seems strangely newer:
All that was wearisome and stale
Has wrapped itself in rosy veil—
The wraith of winter, grown so pale
That smiling spring peeps through her!

The Homesteader

WIND-SWEPT and fire-swept and swept with bitter rain,
This was the world I came to when I came across the sea—
Sun-drenched and panting, a pregnant, waiting plain
Calling out to humankind, calling out to me!

Leafy lanes and gentle skies and little fields all green,
This was the world I came from when I fared across the sea—
The mansion and the village and the farmhouse in between,
Never any room for more, never room for me!

I've fought the wind and braved it; I cringe to it no more!
I've fought the creeping fire back and cheered to see it die.
I've shut the bitter rain outside and, safe within my door,
Laughed to think I feared a thing not so strong as I!

I mind the long, white road that ran between
the hedgerows neat,
In that little, strange old world I left be-
hind me long ago,
I mind the air so full of bells at evening, far
and sweet—
All and all for someone else—I had leave
to go!

It cost a tear to leave it—but here across the
sea
With miles and miles of unused sky, and
miles of unturned loam,
And miles of room for someone else, and
miles of room for me
I've found a bigger meaning for the little
word called "Home."

Wet Weather

IT is the English in me that loves the soft,
wet weather—
The cloud upon the mountain, the
mist upon the sea,
The sea-gull flying low and near with rain
upon each feather,
The scent of deep, green woodlands where
the buds are breaking free.

A world all hot with sunshine, with a hot,
white sky above it—
Oh then I feel an alien in a land I'd call
my own;
The rain is like a friend's caress, I lean to it
and love it,
'Tis like a finger on a nerve that thrills for
it alone!

Is it the secret kinship which each new life
is given
To link it by an age-long chain to those
whose lives are through,
That wheresoever he may go, by fate or fancy
driven,
The home-star rises in his heart to keep the
compass true?

Wet Weather

Ah, 'tis the English in me that loves the soft, gray weather—
The little mists that trail along like bits of wind-flung foam,
The primrose and the violet—all wet and sweet together,
And the sound of water calling, as it used to call at home.

*The Sleeping Beauty

SO has she lain for centuries unguessed,
Her waiting face to waiting heaven turned,
While winds have wooed and ardent suns have burned
And stars have died to sentinel her rest.

Only the snow can reach her as she lies,
Far and serene, and with cold finger-tips
Seal soft the lovely quiet of her lips
And lightly veil the shadows of her eyes.

Man has no part—his little, noisy years
Rise to her silence thin and impotent—
There are no echoes in that vast content,
No doubts, no dreams, no laughter and no tears!

*A formation of mountain peaks above Vancouver Harbor, outlining the profile and form of a sleeping maiden.

Down at the Docks

DOWN at the docks—when the smoke clouds lie,
Wind-ript and red, on an angry sky—
Coal-dumps and derricks and piled-up bales,
Tar and the gear of forgotten sails,
Rusted chains and a broken spar
(Yesterday's breath on the things that are)
A lone, black cat and a snappy cur,
Smell of high-tide and of newcut fir,
Smell of low-tide, fish, weed!—I swear
I love every blesséd smell that's there—
For, aeons ago when the sea began,
My soul was the soul of a sailorman.

Down at the docks—where the ships come in,
And the endless trails of the sea begin,
Where the shining wake of a steamer's track
Is barred by the tow of the tugboats black,
Where slim yachts dip to the singing spray
And a gay wind whistles the world away—
Here sad ships lie which will sail no more,
But new ships build on the noisy shore,
And always the breath of the wind and tide
Whispers the lure of the sea outside,
Till now and to-morrow and yesterday
Are linked by the spell of the faraway!

Down at the docks—when the morning's new
And the air is gold and the distance blue,
There's a pull at the heart! But best of all
Is to see the sun shrink, red and small,
While the fog steals in (more surely fleet
Than the smacks that run from her white-
shod feet)
And clamours of startled calls arise
From bewildered ships that have lost their
eyes;
The fog horn bellows its deep-mouthed shout,
The little lights on the shore blur out
And strange, dim shapes pass wistfully
With a secret tide to a secret sea.

Lake Louise

I THINK that when the Master Jeweler tells
His beads of beauty over, seeking there
One gem to name as most supremely fair,
To you He turns, O lake of hidden wells!

So very lovely are you, Lake Louise,
The stars which crown your lifted peaks at even
Mistake you for a little sea in heaven
And nightly launch their shining argosies.

From shore to dim-lit shore a ripple slips,
The happy sigh of faintly stirring night
Where safe she sleeps upon this virgin height
Captive of dream and smiling with white lips.

Surely a spell, creation-old, was made
For you, O lake of silences, that all
Earth's fretting voices here should muted fall,
As if a finger on their lips were laid!

The Gatekeeper

THE sunlight falls on old Quebec,
A city framed of rose and gold,
An ancient gem more beautiful
In that its beauty waxes old.
O Pearl of Cities! I would set
You higher in our diadem,
And higher yet and higher yet,
That generations still to be
May kindle at your history!

'Twas here that gallant Champlain stood
And gazed upon this mighty stream,
These towering rock-walls, buttressed high—
A gateway to a land of dream;
And all his silent men stood near
While the great fleur-de-lis fell free,
(Too awe-struck they to raise a cheer)
And while the shining folds outspread
The sunset burned a sudden red.

Here paced the haughty Frontenac,
His great heart torn with pride and pain,
His clear eye dimming as it swept
The land he might not see again,
This infant world, this strange New France
Dropped down as by some vagrant wind
Upon the New World's vast expanse,
Threatened yet safe! Through storm and stress
Time's challenge to the wilderness.

Here, when to ease her tangled skein
Fate cut her threads and formed anew
The pattern of the thing she planned
And red war slipped the shuttle through,
Montcalm met Wolfe! The bitter strife
Of flag and flag was ended here—
And every man who gave his life
Gave it that now one flag may wave,
One nation rise upon his grave!

The twilight falls on old Quebec
And in the purple shines a star,
And on her citadel lies peace
More powerful than armies are.
O fair dream city! Ebb and flow
Of race feuds vex no more your walls.
Can they of old see this? and know
That, even as they dreamed, you stand
Gatekeeper of a peace-filled land!

The Bridge Builder

OF old the Winds came romping down,
Oh, wild and free were they!
They bent the prairie grasses low
And made a place to play.

Then, that the gods might hear their voice
On purple days of spring,
They sought the tossing, pine-clad slope
And made a place to sing.

Tired at last of song and play,
They found a canyon deep
And in its echoing silences
They made a place to weep.

Man came, a small and feeble thing,
And looked upon the plain.
"Lo, this is mine," he said, and set
A seal of golden grain.

Upon the mountain slopes he gazed,
Where the great pine trees grow,
Then gashed their mighty sides and laid
Their singing branches low.

He clung upon the canyon's ledge
And from its topmost ridge,
Above its vast and awful deeps,
He built himself a bridge.

A bauble in the light of day,
New gilded by the sun,
It seemed like some great, golden web
By giant spider spun!

The homeless winds came rushing down—
Oh they were wild and free!
And angry for their stolen plain
And for their felled pine tree—

And angry—angry most of all
For that brave bridge of gold!
With deep-mouthed shout they hurtled down
To tear it from its hold—

The girders shrieked, the cables strained
And shuddered at the roar—
Yet, when the winds had passed, the bridge
Held firmly as before!

Still fairy-like and frail it shone
Against the sunset's glow—
But one, the builder of the bridge,
Lay silent, far below!

The Prairie School

THE sweet west wind, the prairie school
a break in the yellow wheat,
The prairie trail that wanders by to
the place where the four winds meet—
A trail with never an end at all to the
children's eager feet.

The morning scents, the morning sun, a morning sky so blue
The distance melts to meet it till both are lost to view
In a little line of glory where the new day beckons through—

And out of the glow, the children: a whoop and a calling gay,
A clink of lunch-pails swinging as they clash in mimic fray,
A shout and a shouting echo from a world as young as they!

The prairie school! The well-tramped earth, so ugly and so dear,
The piney steps where teacher stands, a saucy gopher near,
A rough-cut pole where the flag flies up to a shrill voiced children's cheer.

So stands the outpost! Time and change will
crowd its widening door,
Big with the dreams we visioned and the hopes
we battled for—
A legacy to those who come from those who
come no more.

Calgary Station

DAZZLED by sun and drugged by space they wait,
These homeless peoples, at our prairie gate;
Dumb with the awe of those whom fate has hurled,
Breathless, upon the threshold of a world!

From near-horizoned, little lands they come,
From barren country-side and deathly slum,
From bleakest wastes, from lands of aching drouth,
From grape-hung valleys of the smiling South,
From chains and prisons, ay, from horrid fear,
(Mark you the furtive eye, the listening ear!)
And all amazed and silent, scared and shy—
An alien group beneath an alien sky!

See—on that bench beside the busy door—
There sleeps a Roman born: upon the floor
His wife, dark-haired and handsome, takes her rest,
Their black-eyed baby tugging at her breast.
Her hands lie still. Her brooding glances roam
Above the pushing crowd to her far home,
And slow she smiles to think how fine 'twill be
When they (so rich!) return to Italy.

Calgary Station

Yonder, with stolid face and tragic eye,
Sits a lone Russian; as we pass him by
He neither stirs nor looks; his inner gaze
Sees not the future fair, but, troubled, strays
To the dark land he left but can't forget,
Whose bonds, though broken, hold him prisoner yet.

Here is a Pole—a worker; though so slim
His muscle is of steel—no fear for him;
He is the breed which conquers; he is nerved
To fight and fight again. Too long he served,
Man of a subject race! His fierce, blue eye
Roams like a homing eagle o'er the sky,
So limitless, so deep! for such as he
Life has no higher bliss than to be free.

This little Englishman with jaunty air
And tweed cap perched awry on close-trimmed hair—
He, with his faded wife and noisy band,
Has come from Home to seek a promised land—
He feels himself aggrieved, for no one said
That things would be so big and so—outspread!
He thinks of London with a pang of grief;
His wife is sobbing in her handkerchief.
But all his children stare with eager eyes.
This is their land. Already they surmise
Their heritage, their chance to live and grow,
Won for them by their fathers, long ago!

Another generation, and this Scot,
Whose longing for the hills is ne'er forgot,
Shall rear a son whose eye will never be
Dim with a craving for that distant sea,
Those barren rocks, that heather's purple glow—
The ache, the burn that only exiles know!

This Irishman, who, when he sees the Green,
Turns that his shaking lips may not be seen,
He, too, shall bear a son who, blythe and gay,
Sings the old songs but in a cheerier way!
Who has the love, without the anguish sharp,
For Erin dreamingly by her golden harp!

All these and many others, patient, wait
Before our ever-open prairie gate
And, filing through with laughter or with tears,
Take what their hands can glean of fruitful years.
Here some find home who knew not home before;
Here some seek peace and some wage glorious war.
Here some who lived in night see morning dawn
And some drop out and let the rest go on.
And of them all the years take toll; they pass
As shadows flit above the prairie grass.

Calgary Station

From every land they come to know but one—
The kindly earth that hides them from the sun—
But, in their places, children live, and they
Turn with glad faces to a common day.
Of every land, they too, but one land claim—
The land that gives them place and hope and name—
Canadians, they, and proud and glad to be
A part of Canada's sure destiny!
What if within their hearts deep memories hide
Of lands their fathers grieved for, till they died?
The bitterness is gone and in its stead
New understanding and new hopes are bred,
With wider vision which may show the world
Its cannon dumb, its battle-flags close furled!
—Dreams? We may dream indeed, with heart elate,
While a new Nation clamors at our gate!

Vale *

LONE Voyager! Thy Ship of Dreams
Spreads its free sail and slips away
Into the distant visioning
That lies behind the end of day.

The restless tide's impatient wave
In from the broad Pacific rolls
And sunset marks a mystic way
To the far-shining Port of Souls.

We, watching on the darkening shore,
Wave you farewell, and strain our eyes
Till that bright speck which is your sail
Is lost in the enfolding skies.

Brave Heart, Sweet Singer! Speed you well
To those dim islands of the blest,
Far—far—and ever farther, till
The end of distance brings you rest!

* For Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake.)

The Way to Wait

WHETHER by the lonesome road
that lies across the lea
Or whether by the hill that stoops,
rock-shadowed, to the sea,
Or by a sail that blows from far, my love re-
turns to me!

No fear is hidden in my heart to make my
face less fair,
No tear is hidden in my eye to dim the bright-
ness there—
I wear upon my cheek the rose a happy bride
should wear.

For should he come not by the road, and come
not by the hill
And come not by the far seaway, yet come he
surely will—
Close all the roads of all the world, love's
road is open still!

My heart is light with singing (though they
pity me my fate
And drop their merry voices as they pass the
garden gate)
For love that finds a way to come, can find a
way to wait!

The Passer-By

WE are as children in a field at play
Beside a road whose way we do not know,
Save that somewhere it meets the end of day.

Upon the road there is a Passer-By
Who, pausing, beckons one of us—and lo!
Quickly he goes, nor stays to tell us why.

One day I shall look up and see him there
Beckoning me, and with the Passer-By
I, too, shall take the road—I wonder where?

First Love

BY the pulse that beats in my throat
By my heart like a bird
I know who passed through the dusk
Though he spoke no word!

I cannot move in my place,
I am chained and still;
I pray that the moon pause not
By my window-sill.

I have hidden my face in my hair
And my eyes are veiled—
Not even a star must know
How my lips have paled—

Was ever a night so quick
'Neath a moon so round?
I hear the earth as it turns—
And my heart's low sound!

Sad One, Must You Weep

"SAD one, must you weep alway?
Youth's ill wedded with despair;
Ringless hand and robe of grey
Mock the charms which they declare."

Sad and sweetly answered she,
"What are comely robes to me?
I would wear a grass green dress,
Dew pearls for my gems—no less
Now can comfort me."

"Sweet, the shining of your hair
(All forgotten and undone)
Squanders 'neath the veil you wear
Gold whose loss bereaves the sun."

Very sad and low said she,
"What is shining hair to me?
When from out the rain-wet mold
Kingcups borrow of its gold
Sweet and sweet 'twill be."

"Love, O Love! your hand is chill
As a snowflake lost in spring,
Wild it flutters—then lies still
As a bird with prisoned wing!"

Sad and patient answered she,
"As a bird I would be free;
As the spring I would find birth
In the sweet, forgetful earth—
Pray you, let it be!"

Joseph

NEVER in all her sweet and holy youth
Seemed she so beautiful! The tired lines
Etch her white face with look so wholly pure
I tremble—dare I speak to her of aught?—
She is so wrapt in silence. Yet her lips
Part on a word whose honey she doth taste
And fears to lose by uttering too soon.
I know the word; its meaning is plain writ
In the wide eyes she turns upon the Child.
I dare not speak. No word of mine could find
Its way into a soul close sealed with God
And busy with the thousand mysteries
Revealed to every mother. The soft hair
Veiling her placid brow is all unbound,
Ungentle hands are mine but, trained by love,
She might conceive them gentle—yet, I pause—
I'll not disturb her thought . . . . .

What meant those men,
Far-famed and wise, who came to see the Child?
Their gifts lie by forgotten, though the Babe
Smiled on the shining treasure in his hands.
(Those tiny hands like crumpled bits of gauze)
Their sayings were mysterious to me.
"A King!" they said. What King?

The mother smiled
As one who knew; and it is true they knelt
As to a King. The thing disturbs me much!
I'll ask—but no . . . . .

The breathless shepherds, too;
Plain men, blank-eyed with awe, in broken speech
Stumbling some strange, glad tale of midnight sky
A-shine with angel wings! And at their word
Again the mother smiled, as one who sees
No wonder but what well might happen since
A child is born to her. Are mothers so?
And are they prone to dream the careless earth
And distant heaven wait upon their joy?
I'll speak to her . . . . .

What is that in her look
Which answers me—yet leaves me wondering still,
With wonder so like rapture that I seem
Caught up a breathless second into Heaven?
She turns deep eyes upon me, and she smiles,
Always she smiles! Ah, Mary! could I know
The source of that glad smile—what would I know?
I dare not dream, save that the mystery
Is not yet given . . . one day I may know!

A Christmas Child

SHE came to me at Christmas time and made me mother, and it seemed
There was a Christ indeed and He had given me the joy I'd dreamed.

She nestled to me, and I kept her near and warm, surprised to find
The arms that held my babe so close were opened wider to her kind.

I hid her safe within my heart. "My heart" I said, "is all for you,"
But lo! She left the door ajar and all the world came flocking through.

She needed me. I learned to know the royal joy that service brings,
She was so helpless that I grew to love all little helpless things.

She trusted me, and I who ne'er had trusted, save in self, grew cold
With panic lest this precious life should know no stronger, surer hold.

She lay and smiled and in her eyes I watched my narrow world grow broad,
Within her tiny, crumpled hand I touched the mighty hand of God!

Spring in Nazareth

"THE Spring is come!" a shepherd saith;
Sing, sweet Mary,
"The Spring is come to Nazareth
And swift the Summer hurrieth."
Sing low, the barley and the corn!

Across the field a path is set—
Sing, sweet Mary,
Green shadow in a golden net—
The tears of night have left it wet.
Sing low, the barley and the corn!

The Babe forsakes His mother's knee,
Haste, sweet Mary—
See how He runneth merrily,
One foot upon the path hath He—
Green, green, the barley and the corn!

The mother calls with mother-fear—
Hush, sweet Mary!
Another sound is in His ear,
A sound he cannot choose but hear—
Hush, hush, the barley and the corn!

Far and still far—through years yet dim
List, sweet Mary!
From o'er the waking earth's green rim
Another Springtime calleth Him!
Bend low, the barley and the corn!

Call low, call high, and call again,
Ah, poor Mary!
Know, by thy heart's prophetic pain,
That one day thou shalt call in vain—
Moan, moan, the barley and the corn!

O mother! make thine arms a shield,
Sing, sweet Mary!
While love still holds what love must yield
Hide well the path across the field!—
Sing low, the barley and the corn!

. . . . .

"The Spring is come!" a shepherd saith;
Rest thee, Mary—
The passing years are but a breath
And Spring still comes to Nazareth—
Green, green, the barley and the corn!

Inheritance

THERE lived a man who raised his hand and said,
"I will be great!"
And through a long, long life he bravely knocked
At Fame's closed gate.

A son he left who, like his sire, strove
High place to win;—
Worn out, he died and, dying, left no trace
That he had been.

He also left a son, who, without care
Or planning how,
Bore the fair letters of a deathless fame
Upon his brow.

"Behold a genius, filled with fire divine!"
The people cried;
Not knowing that to make him what he was
Two men had died.

Song of the Sleeper

SLEEPER rest quietly
Deep underground!
Lord of your kingdom
Of murmurous sound.
Hear the grass growing
Sweet for the mowing;
Hear the stars sing
As they travel around—
Grass blade and star dust,
You, I, and all of us,
One with the cause of us,
Deep underground!

Murmur not, sleeper!
Yours is the key
To all things that were and
To all things that be—
While the lark's trilling,
While the grain's filling,
Laugh with the wind
At Life's Riddle-me-ree!
How you were born of it?
Why was the thorn of it?
Where the new morn of it?
Yours is the Key!

Sleep deeper, brother!
Sleep and forget
Red lips that trembled
Eyes that were wet—

Though love be weeping,
Turn to your sleeping,
Life has no giving
  That death need regret.
Here at the end of all
Hear the Beginning call,
Life's but death's seneschal—
  Sleep and forget!

The Tyrant

ONE comes with foot insistent to my door,
Calling my name;
Nor voice nor footstep have I heard before,
Yet clear the calling sounds and o'er and o'er—
It seems the sunlight burns along the floor
With paler flame!

"'Tis vain to call with morning on the wing,
With noon so near,
With Life a dancer in the masque of Spring
And Youth new wedded with a golden ring—
When falls the night and birds have ceased to sing
My heart may hear!

"'Tis vain to pause. Pass, friend, upon your way!
I may not heed;
Too swift the hours; too sweet, too brief the day:
Only one life, one spring, one perfect May—
I crush each moment, with its sweets to stay
Life's joyous greed!

"Call not again! The wind is roaming by
Across the heath—
The Wind's a tell-tale and will bear your sigh
To dim the smiling gladness of the sky

Or kill the spring's first violets that lie
In purple sheath—

"If you must call, call low! My heart grows still,
Still as my breath,
Still as your smile, O Ancient One! A chill
Strikes through the sun upon the window-sill—
I know you now—I follow where you will,
O tyrant Death!"

The Gifts

I GIVE you Life, O child, a garden fair;
I give you Love, a rose that blossoms there—
I give a day to pluck it and to wear!

I give you Death, O child—a boon more great—
That, when your Rose has withered and 'tis late,
You may pass out and, smiling, close the gate!

The Town Between

A WALL impregnable surrounds
The Town wherein I dwell;
No man may scale it and it has
Two gates that guard it well.

One opened long ago, and I
A vagrant soul, slipped through,
Bewildered and forgetting all
The wider world I knew.

I love the Town, the narrow ways,
The common, yellow sun,
The handclasp and the jesting and
The work that must be done!

I shun the other gate that stands
Beyond the crowded mart—
I need but glance that way to feel
Cold fingers on my heart!

It stands alone and somberly
Within a shaded place,
And every man who turns that way
Has quiet on his face.

And every man must rise and leave
His pleasant homely door
To vanish through this silent gate
And enter in no more—

Yet—once—I saw its opening throw
A brighter light about
And glimpsed strange glory on the brow
Of someone passing out!

I wonder if Outside may be
One fair and great demesne
Where both gates open, careless of
The Town that lies between?

On the Mountain

THE top of the world and an empty morning,
Mist sweeping in from the dim Outside,
The door of day just a little bit open—
The wind's great laugh as he flings it wide!

O wind, here's one who would travel with you
To the far bourne you alone may know—
There would I seek what some one is hiding,
There would I find where my longings go!

To some deep calm would I drift and nestle
Close to the heart of the Great Surprise.
O strong wind, do you laugh to see us?
We are so little and oh, so wise!

The Prophet

HE trod upon the heights; the rarer air
Which common people seek, yet cannot bear,
Fed his high soul and kindled in his eye
The fire of one who cries "I prophesy!"

"Look up!" he said. They looked but could not see.
"Help us!" they cried. He strove, but uselessly—
The very clouds which veiled the heaven they sought
Hid from his eyes the hearts of them he taught!

Give Me a Day

GIVE me a day, beloved, that I may set
A jewel in my heart—I'll brave regret,
If, on the morrow, you shall say
"forget"!

One golden day when dawn shall blush to
noon
And noon incline to dark, and, oversoon,
My joy lie buried 'neath a rounded moon.

Only a day—it's worth you scarce could tell
From other days; but in my life 'twill dwell
An oasis with palm trees and a well!

Little Brown Bird

O LITTLE brown bird in the rain,
In the sweet rain of spring,
How you carry the youth of the world
In the bend of your wing!
For you the long day is for song
And the night is for sleep—
With never a sunrise too soon
Or a midnight too deep!

For you every pool is the sky,
Breaking clouds chasing through,—
A heaven so instant and near
That you bathe in its blue!—
And yours is the freedom to rise
To some song-haunted star
Or sink on soft wing to the wood
Where your brown nestlings are.

So busy, so strong and so glad,
So care-free and young,
So tingling with life to be lived
And with songs to be sung,
O little brown bird!—with your heart
That's the heart of the Spring—
How you carry the hope of the world
In the bend of your wing!

The Watcher

THE long road and the low shore, a sail against the sky,
The ache in my heart's core, and hope so hard to die—
Ah me, but the day's long—and all the sails go by!

The long road and the dark shore, pools with stars aflame,
The ache in my heart's core, the hope I dare not name—
Ah, me, but the night's long—and every night the same!

Possession

A YOUTH sat down on a wayside stone,
A pack on his back and a staff at his knee.
He whistled a tune which he called his own,
"It's a fine new tune, that tune!" said he.

In his pack he carried a crust of bread,
And he drank from his hands at a brook hard by;
"Spring water is wonderful cool," he said,
"And wonderful soft is the summer sky!"

He looked to the hill which his steps had passed,
He looked to the slope where a brooklet purled,
He looked to the distance blue and vast
And "Ah," cried he, "what a fine, wide world!"

The youth passed on down the winding track
That led to the beckoning distance dim,
And though he carried but staff and pack,
The world and its giving belonged to him.

To Arcady

TELL me, Singer, of the way
Winding down to Arcady?
Of the world's roads I am weary—
You, with song so brave and cheery,
Happy troubadour must be
On the way to Arcady?"

Pausing on a muted note,
Song forsook the Singer's throat,
"Friend," sighed he, "you come too late,
Once I could the way relate,
Once—but long ago; Ah me,
Far away is Arcady!"

"Tell me, Poet, of the way
Winding down to Arcady?
Haunting is your verse and airy
With the grace and gleam of faery—
Dweller you must surely be
In the land of Arcady?"

Slow the Poet raised his eyes,
Sad were they as winter skies,
"Once, I sojourned there," he said;
Then, no more—but with bent head
Whispered low, "Ask not of me
That lost road to Arcady!"

To Arcady

Tell me, Lover, of the way
Winding down to Arcady?
Some sweet bourne your haste confesses—
Know you paths no other guesses?
Does your gaze, so far away,
See the road to Arcady?

In the Lover's eyes there gleamed
Radiance of all things dreamed—
"Nay, detain me not," he cried
"I am hasting to my bride;
What have roads to do with me,
Love's at home in Arcady!"

The Fields of Even

O STILLER than the fields that lie
Beneath the morning heaven,
And sweeter than day's gardens are
The purple fields of even!

The vapor rises, silver-eyed,
Leaving the dew-wet clover,
With groping, mist-white hands outspread
To greet the sky, her lover.

Ripples the brook, a thread of sound
Close-woven through the quiet,
Blending the jarring tones that day
Would stir to noisy riot.

And all the glory seems so near
A common man may win it—
When every earth-bound lakelet holds
A million stars within it.

A common man, who in the day
Lifts not his eyes above him,
Roaming the fields of even through
May find a God to love him!

I Love My Love

I LOVE my love for she is like a garden
in the dawn,
Pale, yet pink-flushed, with softly waking eyes,
And primrose hair that brightens to gold
skies,
And petalled lips for dew to linger on.

I love my love for she is like the mirror of
the moon,
(A sweet, small moon but newly come to
birth)
So full of heaven is she, so close to earth,
So versed in holy spell and magic rune.

I love my love. O words that be too feeble
and too few!
I love my love!—as April on the hill
Brings back earth's morning with each
daffodil,
So she within my heart makes all things new.

Spring Awoke To-Day

SPRING awoke to-day!
Somewhere—far away—
Spring awoke to-day
From the depth of dream.

Through the air bestirred
Pulse of winging bird,
Through the air bestirred
Laugh of hidden stream.

On the world's cold lips
Fell warm finger-tips;
On the world's cold lips
Woke the glow and gleam!

Spring awoke to-day!
Somewhere—far away—
Spring awoke to-day
From the depth of dream!

In Town

SOMEWHERE there's a willow budding
In a hollow by the river,
Where the autumn leaves lie sodden,
Turning all the pool to brown;
There's a thrush who's building early,
With his feathers all a-shiver,
And the maple sap is rising—
But I'm glad that I'm in town.

Somewhere out there in the country
There's a brook that's overflowing,
And a quaker pussy-willow
Sews grey velvet on her gown;
Rushes whisper to each other
That marsh marigolds are showing,
And those saucy crocus fellows—
But I'm glad that I'm in town.

Long ago, when we were younger,
How those little things enthralled us;
King-birds nesting in the hedges,
Baby field-mice soft as down,
Muskrats in the sun-warmed shallows—
Strange how all these voices called us!—
Hark, was that a robin singing?
When's the next train out of town?

Summer's Passing

A SINGLE branch of flaming red,
A branch of tawny yellow
And every branch in gorgeousness
A rival of its fellow;
Some russet brown and faded green
With golden shadows in between
And mist-hid sun to mellow.

An instinct as of music near—
A breath the wind is bringing,
Broken and sweet, as from a host
Of swift and solemn winging—
A mystery born of light and sound
Wrapping our trancéd progress round—
A sighing and a singing!

Thus in a certain lovely pomp
We leave the Summer lying—
These are her funeral banners, this
The pageantry of dying!
The music that we almost hear
Is wafted from her passing bier—
The singing and the sighing!

The Doom of Ys

DO you hear the bell? 'Tis a silver chime
But it ringeth not in the bourne of time.

With the wind it swells, with the wind 'twill sink,
Dying at last by the sea's dim brink.

By mortal hands the bell was hung
By mortal hands 'tis never swung.

When the moon's at full and the long tide creeps
It rings o'er the town that the deep sea keeps—

The town of Ys, that, unafraid,
Cursed God's good bells for the noise they made,

Cursed them well and pulled them down
From every belfry in the town!

For that sin of pride and that pride of sin,
Deathly and soft, a Doom stole in.

It sucked through the stone, it stole through the street,
It rose in the hall, silent and fleet;

Soundless it swept through the market-place
Folding the town in a chill embrace;

No ruth it knew, it heard no call,
Sinner and saint it gathered them all,

Gathered them all, while over them
The bells they had cursed tolled requiem.

Do you hear the bell? When the full moon
rides
It rings o'er the town that the deep sea hides!'

Time's Garden

YEARS are the seedlings which we careless sow
In Time's bare garden. Dead they seem to be—
Dead years! We sigh and cover them with mould,
But though the vagrant wind blow hot, blow cold,
No hint of life beneath the dust we see;
Then comes the magic hour when we are old,
And lo! they stir and blossom wondrously.

Strange spectral blooms in spectral plots aglow!
Here a great rose and here a ragged tare;
And here pale, scentless blossoms without name,
Robbed to enrich this poppy formed of flame;
Here springs some hearts'ease, scattered unaware;
Here, hawthorn-bloom to show the way Love came;
Here, asphodel, to image Love's despair!

When I am old and master of the spell
To raise these garden ghosts of memory,
My feet will turn aside from common ways,

Where common flowers mark the common days,
To one green plot; and there I know will be
Fairest of all (O perfect beyond praise!)
The year you gave, beloved, your rosemary.

Time's Garden

The Coming of Love

HOW shall I know? Shall I hear Love pass
In the wind that sighs through the poplar tree?
Shall I follow his passing over the grass
By the prisoned scents which his footsteps free?

Shall I wake one day to a sky all blue
And meet with Spring in a crowded street?
Shall I open a door and, looking through,
Find, on a sudden, the world more sweet?

How shall I know?—last night I lay
Counting the hours' dreary sum
With naught in my heart save a wild dismay
And a fear that whispered, "Love is come!"

Premonition

LAST night I dreamed
No dream of joy or sorrow,
Yet, when I woke, I wept,
Knowing the brightness of some far to-
morrow
Had darkened while I slept!

The Child

I MAY not lift him in my arms. His face
I may not see—
Are angel hands more tender than a
mother's hands may be?
And does he smile to hear the song an angel
stole from me?

The wise King said, "He cannot come but I
will go to him!"
O David! did you seek with words to make
the grave less grim?
And did you think to cheat, with words, the
jealous seraphim?

So! he will learn of heaven—he, who scarcely
knew the earth.
All fullness waits the baby eyes that never
looked on dearth—
The mystery of death usurps the mystery of
birth!

What light has earth to give me for the light
that heaven beguiled?
What is the calm of heaven to him who has
not known the wild?—
O, we are both bereft, bereft—the mother and
the child!

Intrusion

I BUILT myself a pleasant house.
Content was I to dwell in it—
Its door was fast against the wind
With all the gusty swell of it.

It had two windows, high and clear,
With trees and skies to shine through them,
They were acquainted with the moon,
And every star was mine through them.

Its walls were silent walls; its hearth
Held little fires to gladden me—
And though the nights might weep outside
No sob crept through to sadden me.

Then came your hand upon the latch
(Although I had not sent for you)
And all Outside came blowing in
The way I had not meant it to!

Upon the hearth my tended flame
Leapt to a blaze and died in it.
The night sought out a hidden place
I had forgot and sighed in it.

My window that had known the stars
Seemed suddenly not high at all.
The trees drew back; the friendly birds
Swept dumbly by, too shy to call.

Intrusion

Said you: "It is a pleasant house,
But surely somewhat small for two!"—
And at your word my walls fell down,
Leaving no house at all, just you.

The Sea's Withholding

THE ladye's bower faced the sea,
Its casements framed a sea-born day.
She saw the fishers sail away,
And, far and high,
The gulls sweep by
Within the hollow of the sky!

She saw the laggard twilight come
And, chased by rippling wakes of foam,
She saw the fisher fleet come home—
Brown sails a-sheen
Against the green
With shadows creeping in between!

She saw, when it was evening, all
Day's banners stream in crimson rout
Till night's soft finger blurred them out,
And, high and far,
A perfect star
Shone where the keys of heaven are!

"O far and constant star," she said,
"O passing sail, O passing bird,
O passing day—bring you no word
Of winds that steer
His ship a-near?
Where sails my love that sails not here?

"The days in splendid pageant pass,
In lovely peace the nights go by,
And day and night are sweet; but I—
  I cannot say
  Lo, the bright day!
Can it be dawn and love away?"

Love Unkind

OUT upon the bleak hillside, the bleak hillside, he lay—
Her lips were red, and red the stream that slipped his life away.
Ah, crimson, crimson were her lips, but his were turning gray.

The troubled sky seemed bending low, bending low to hide
The foam-white face so wild upturned from off the bleak hillside—
White as the beaten foam her face, and she was wond'rous eyed.

The soft, south-wind came creeping up, creeping stealthily
To breathe upon his clay-cold face—but all too cold was he,
Too cold for you to warm, south-wind, since cold at heart was she!

Sweet morning peeped above the hill, above the hill to find
The shattered, useless, godlike thing the night had left behind—
Wept the sweet morn her crystal tears that love should prove unkind!

Christmas in Heaven

HOW hushed they were in Heaven that night,
How lightly all the angels went,
How dumb the singing spheres beneath
Their many-candled tent!

How silent all the drifting throng
Of earth-freed spirits, strangely torn
By dim and half-remembered pain
And joy but newly born!

The Glory in the Highest flamed
With awful, unremembered ray—
But quiet as the falling dew
Was He who went away.

So swift He went, His passing left
A low, bright door in Heaven ajar—
With God it was a covenant,
To man it seemed a star.

I Whispered to the Bobolink

I WHISPERED to the bobolink:
"Sweet singer of the field,
Teach me a song to reach a heart
In maiden armor steeled."

"If there be such a song," sang he,
"No bird can tell its mystery."

I bent above the sweetest rose,
A deeper sweet to stir—
"O Rose," I begged, "what charm will wake
The deep, sweet heart of her?"

"Alas, poor lover," sighed the rose,
"The charm you seek no flower knows."

I wandered by the midnight lake
Where heaven lay confessed
"Tell me," I cried, "what draws the stars
To lie upon your breast?"

The silence woke to soft reply
"When Heaven stoops—demand not why!"

"Alas, sweet maid, love's potent charm
I cannot beg or buy,
I cannot wrest it from the wind
Or steal it from the sky—"

Breathless, I caught her whisper low,
"I love you—why, I do not know!"

You

SLANTING rain and a sky of gray,
Drifting mist and a wind astray,
The leaden end of a leaden day
And you—away!

Light in the west! The sky's pale dome
Gemmed with a star; a scented gloam
Of bursting buds and rain-wet loam
And you—at home!

The Mother

LAST night he lay within my arm,
So small, so warm—a mystery
To which God only held the key—
But mine to keep from fear and harm!

Ah! He was all my own, last night,
With soft, persuasive, baby eyes,
So wondering and yet so wise,
And hands that held my finger tight.

Why was it that he could not stay—
Too rare a gift? Yet who could hold
A treasure with securer hold
Than I, to whom love taught the way?

As with a flood of golden light
The first sun tipped earth's golden rim
So all my world grew bright with him
And with his going fell the night—

O God, is there an angel arm
More strong, more tender than the rest?
Lay Thou my baby on his breast
To keep him safe from fear and harm!

The Vassal

WIND of the North, O far, wild wind
Born of a far, lone sea—
When suns are soft and breezes kind
Why are you kin to me?

Uncounted years above the sea,
Rock-fortressed from its rage,
The fishermen, your fathers, kept
A barren heritage—
Grim as the sea they forced to pay
The sea-toll of their wage.

And lo! The fate which made you hers
And gave you of her best
And set you in a sunny place,
Down-sloping to the West,
Forgot to change your fisher's heart
Serf to the sea's unrest!

Wind of the North! O bitter wind,
I hear the wild seas fret—
In the dim spaces of the mind
They claim me vassal yet!

The Troubadour

THE wind blows salt from off the sea
And sweet from where the land lies green;
I travel down the great highway
That runs so straight and white between—
I watch the sea-wind strain the sheet,
The land-wind toss the yellow wheat!

Song is my mistress, fickle she,
Yet dear beyond all dearth of speech;
Child of the winds of land and sea
She charms me with the charm of each—
Full soft and sweet she sings and then
She sings wild songs for sailor-men!

No staff I carry in my hand,
No pack I carry on my back,
No foot of earth I call my own,
For castle or for cot I lack—
I travel fast, I travel slow,
And where my mistress bids I go!

My gems, the pearl upon the leaf
At mystic hour of the morn;
My gold, the gold that rims the sea
A moment ere the day is born;
And on my breezy couch o' nights
The stars shine down—my taper lights!

Happy am I that sing of love,
  Yet from the thrall of love am free;
Happy am I that sing of pain
  And quick forget what pain may be!
I sing of death—and lo! To me
Life is supremest ecstacy!

Indian Summer

I HAVE strayed from silent places,
Where the days are dreaming always;
And fair summer lies a-dying,
Roses withered on her breast.
I have stolen all her beauty,
All her softness, all her sweetness;
In her robe of folden sunshine
I am drest.

I will breathe a mist about me
Lest you see my face too clearly,
Lest you follow me too boldly
I will silence every song.
Through the haze and through the silence
You will know that I am passing;
When you break the spell that holds you,
I am gone!

The Unchanged

IF we could salvage Babylon
From times's grim heap of dust and bones;
If we could charm cool waters back
To sing against her thirsty stones;
If, on a day,
We two should stray
Down some long, Babylonian way—
Perhaps the strangest sight of all
Would be the street boys playing ball.

If through Pompeii's agelong night
A yellow sun again might shine,
And little, sea-born breezes lift
The hair of lovers sipping wine,
If, in some fair,
Dim temple there,
We watched Pompeii come to prayer—
Not the strange altar would surprise
But strangeness of familiar eyes!

Ay, should our magic straightly wake
Atlantis from her sea-rocked sleep
And we on some Processional
Look down where dancing maidens leap,
If one flushed maid
Beside us stayed
To tie more firm her loosened braid—
Would not the shaking wonder be
To find her just like you and me?

Indifference

A BIRD, a wild-flower and a tree—
I care for them, not they for me.

I see all heaven in a pool—
But the frog there takes me for a fool.

To this dead thrush a tear I gave—
All Spring shall sing above my grave,

And naught I spend my heart upon
Know lack or loss that I am gone—

A bird, a wild-flower and a tree,
I cherish them; they suffer me!

Last Things

THERE is no one to do it for me,
But I know what I shall do
When the last dawn breaks o'er me
And the last night is through.

I shall set in pleasant order
The little books I knew,
With flowers on the window ledge
In a shallow bowl of blue.

I'll leave the out door swinging,
(As it might swing for you)
And on the clean swept door-sill
Wild roses I shall strew—

So when pale Death comes trailing
Her branch of sodden rue
She'll gather up my gay content
And know contentment too!

Callous Cupid

CUPID does not care for sighs
Does not care for lover's weeping!
Fair One, dry your pretty eyes,
Cupid does not care for sighs,
Laugh with him if you are wise,
Steel the heart he has in keeping;
Cupid does not care for sighs
Does not care for lover's weeping!

The Meeting

SHE flitted by me on the stair—
A moment since I knew not of her.
A look, a smile—she passed! but where
She flitted by me on the stair
Joy cradled exquisite despair;
For who am I that I should love her?
She flitted by me on the stair—
A moment since I knew not of her!

The Piper

I'VE heard the pipes of Pan
Somewhere, just beyond,—
Over the edge of dawn, I think,
Where the clouds hang soft on the world's dim brink,
Where the red suns rise and the blue stars sink,
I heard the pipes of Pan!

Hush! what you heard was the wind,
The feet of the wind through the leaves,
Or the sigh of the waking night as it stirred.
Or a bird's note afar,
Or the deep breath of June,
Or the fall of a star,
Or the shimmering skirts of the sea-slipping tide
In the wake of the wandering moon!

Nay! 'twas the pipes of Pan!
Somewhere—just beyond—
My soul awoke with a rapturous sigh
(Would I wake my soul for a night bird's cry?)
I heard the winds of the worlds sweep by
To follow the pipes of Pan!

Stay! 'twas a voice that you heard,
A voice that you love, in the wood,
The vibrating note of a half spoken word—
For the great Pan is slain,

The Piper

Of his pipings we know not one magical strain,
They have fled down the years of a world that was young
Oh, ages and ages ago!

Nay, 'twas the pipes of Pan!
Somewhere—just beyond—
Far as a star, yet piercing sweet,
A passionate, poignant, rhythmic beat—
Till my mad blood raced with my racing feet
To follow the piper—Pan!

Wanderlust

THE highways and the byways, the kind sky folding all,
And never a care to drag me back and never a voice to call;
Only the call of the long, white road to the far horizon's wall.

The glad seas and the mad seas, the seas on a night in June,
And never a hand to beckon back from the path of the new-lit moon;
Never a night that lasts too long or a dawn that breaks too soon!

The shrill breeze and the hill breeze, the sea breeze, fierce and bold,
And never a breeze that gives the lie to a tale that a breeze has told;
Always the tale of the strange and new in the countries strange and old.

The lone trail and the known trail, the trail you must take on trust,
And never a trail without a grave where a wanderer's bones are thrust—
Never a look or a turning back till the dust shall claim the dust!

Gold

WHEN life wakened in the Spring
All the world was gold and green!
Sunlight lay on everything,
Sailing cloud and soaring wing,
Emerald banks where snow had been,
Drifts of daffodils between.

When Life's pulse beat strong and high
Shone the world in gold and blue!
Canopied with turquoise sky
Summer passed superbly by,
Bluest midnight cupped the dew
Golden morn might sparkle through!

Now that life would rest again
Soft she lies in gold and brown,
Brown the fields and gold the grain,
Brown the little pools of rain,
Gold the leaves that falter down
To brown pavements in the town.

The Materialist

MY soul has left its tent of clay
And seeks from star to star,
'Mid flaming worlds that are to be,
And fruitful worlds that are,
The Voice which spake and said "Live on!"
(When Death said, "You may die")
And sent my spirit wandering
The stairway of the sky.

Still must I seek what on the earth
I sought as fruitlessly—
The world I knew, the heaven I scorned
Lost in infinity:
Alone, and on the ageless breath
Of cosmic whirlwinds spun,
I hurtle through the outer dark
Toward some fantastic sun!—

O God! how happy is the leaf,
A sweet and soulless thing,
Dying to live but in the green
Of yet another Spring—
These heights, these depths, these flaming worlds,
This stairway of the sky
I'd give, had no Voice said "Live on!"
When Death said, "You may die."

Tir Nan Og

THE breeze blows out from the land
and it seeks the sea,
O and O! that my sail were set and
away—
Fast and free on its wings would my sailing
be
To the west: to the Tir Nan Og, where the
blesséd stay!

The darkness stirs, it awakes, it outspreads
its arms,
O and O! and the birds in their nests are
still,
The red-browed hill bleats low with the lamb's
alarms,
And a sound of singing comes from the
slipping rill.

My soul is awake alone, all alone in the earth,
O and O! and around is the lonely night.
As with the sun, would my soul go forth to
its birth—
O'er the darkling sea, to the west—to the
light, to the light!

Do they say, "Be content with the land of the
Innis Fail,
O and O! there is friendship here, there is
song."
But they smile to your face, when you turn
they stammer and rail

And the song of the singer has tears and
is over long!

A call comes out of the west and it calls a
name,
O and O! it is soft, it is far, it is low—
Sweet, so sweet that it touches my soul with
a flame
That burns the heart from my breast with
the wish to go!

(Translated from the Celtic.)

The Little Man in Green

'TWAS a little man in green,
And he sat upon a stone;
And he sat there all alone,
Whispering.

"One and two," so whispered he.
('Twas an ancient man and hoar)
"One and two," and then no more—
Never, "Three".

Hawthorn trees were quick with May—
"Sir," said I, "Good-day to you"!
But he counted. "One and two"
In strange way.

Fool I was—oh, fool was I
(Who should know the ways of them!)
That I touched his cloak's green hem,
Passing by.

I was fey with spring and mirth—
Speaking him without a thought—
Now is joy a thing forgot
On the earth.

Ere the sweet thorn-buds were through,
Wife and child doom-stricken lay,
Cold as winter, white as spray—
"One and two!"

Now I seek eternally
That grim Counter of the fen,
Praying he may count again—
Counting, "Three".

---

* In the bad chance of a meeting with the "Little People," the mortal is cautioned not to speak to them nor to touch, but to pass by quickly with averted eye.—Old tale.

The Enchantress

I FEAR Eileen, the wild Eileen—
The eyes she lifts to mine,
That laugh and laugh and never tell
The half that they divine!

She draws me to her lonely cot
Ayont the Tulloch Hill;
And, laughing, draws me to her door
And, laughing, holds me still.

I bless myself and bless myself,
But in the holy sign,
There seems to be no heart of love,
To still the pain in mine.

The morning, bright above the moor,
Is bright no more for me—
A weary bit of burning pain
Is where my heart should be!

For since the wild, sweet laugh of her
Has drawn me to her snare,
The only sunlight in the world
Is shining from her hair.

Yet well I know, ah, well I know
Why 'tis so sweet and wild—
She slept beneath a faery thorn,
She is a faery child!

And so I leave my mother lone,
  No meal to fill the pot,
And follow, follow wild Eileen,
  If so I will or not.

I fear to meet her in the glen,
  Or seek her by the shore;
I fear to lift her cabin's latch,
  But—should she come no more!—

O Eileen Og, O wild Eileen,
  My heart is wracked with fear
Lest you should meet your faery kin,
  And, laughing, leave me here!

The Banshee

THE Banshee cries on the rising wind
"O-hoho, O hoho-o-o!"
The dead to free and the quick to bind—
(Close fast the shutter and draw the blind!)
"O-hoho, O hoho-o-o!"

Why are you paler my dearest dear?
"O-hoho, O hoho-o-o!"
'Tis but the wind in the elm tree near—
(Acushla, hush! lest the Banshee hear!)
"O-hoho, O hoho-o-o!"

See, how the crackling fire up-springs,
"O-hoho, O hoho-o-o!"
Up and up on its flame-red wings;
Hark, how the cheerful kettle sings!
"O-hoho, O hoho-o-o!"

Core of my heart! How cold your lips!
"O-hoho, O hoho-o-o!"
White as the spray the wild wind whips,
Still as your icy finger tips!
"O-hoho, O hoho-o-o!"

On the rising wind the Banshee cries—
"O-hoho, O hoho-o-o!"
I kiss your hair. I kiss your eyes—
The kettle is dumb; the red flame dies!
"Ochone! Ochone! Ochone!"

The Witch

HER hair was gold and warm it lay
Upon the pallor of her brow;
Her eyes were deep, aye, deep and gray—
And in their depths he drowned his vow.

She wandered where the sands were wet,
Weaving the sea-weed for a crown,
And there at eve a monk she met—
A holy monk in cowl and gown.

She held him with her witch's stare
(A sweet, child-look—it witched him well!)
Upon his lip she froze the prayer,
And in his ear she breathed a spell.

He babbled ever of her name
And of her brow that gleamed like dawn,
And of her lips—a lovely shame
No holy man should think upon.

They hunted her along the sea,
"Witch, Witch!" they cried and hissed their hate—
Her hair unbound fell to her knee
And made a glory where she sate.

Her song she hushed and, wonder-eyed,
She gazed upon their bell and book;
The zealous priests were fain to hide
Lest they be holden by her look.

The Witch

Most innocent she seemed to be
("The Devil's sly!" the fathers say)
Her eyes were dreaming eyes that see
Things strange and fair and far away.

They stood her in the judgment hall.
"Confess," they cried, "the blasting spell
That holds yon crazéd monk in thrall?"
"Good sirs," she said, "he loved me well."

They haled her to a witch's doom,
They matched her shining hair with flame—
But ever through the cloister's gloom
The mad monk babbles of her name!

And, when the red sun droppeth down
And wet sand gleameth ghostily,
Men see her weave a sea-weed crown
Between the twilight and the sea.

Fairy Singing

SHE was my love and the pulse of my heart;
Lovely she was as the flowers that start
Straight to the sun from the earth's tender breast,
Sweet as the wind blowing out of the west—
Elana, Elana, my strong one, my white one,
Soft be the wind blowing over your rest!

She crept to my side
In the cold mist of morning.
"O wirra" she cried,
"'Tis farewell now, mavourneen!
When the crescent moon hung
Like a scythe in the sky,
I heard in the silence
The Little Folks cry.

"'Twas like a low sighing,
A sobbing, a singing;
It came from the west,
Where the low moon was swinging:
'Elana, Elana'
Was all of their crying.
Mavrone! I must go—
To refuse them, I dare not.
Alone I must go;
They have called and they care not—
Naught do they care that they call me apart

Fairy Singing

From the warmth and the light and the love of your heart.
Hark! How their singing
Comes winging, comes winging,
Through your close arms, beloved,
Straight to my heart!"

White grew her face as the thorn's tender bloom,
White as the mist from the valley of doom!
Swift was her going—her head on my breast
Drooped like a flower that winter has pressed—
Elana, Elana! My strong one, my white one!
Empty the arms that your beauty had blessed.

Killed in Action

MY father lived his three-score years;
my son lived twenty-two;
One looked long back on work well done, and one had all to do—
Yet which the better served his world, I know not, nor do you!

Life taught my father all her lore till he grew wise and gray,
She did but whisper to my son before she turned away—
Yet which her deepest secret held only they two might say.

Peace brought my father restful days, with love and fame for wage;
War gave my son an unmarked grave and an unwritten page—
Who shall declare which gift conveyed the greater heritage?

Spring Came In

SPRING came in with a red-wing's feather
And yellow clumps of the wild marsh-mallow—
O happy bird, can you tell me whether
In distant France they have April weather?
And little pools that are sunny and shallow?

My soul is awake and my pulse is racing—
My heart is aware that the birds are mating—
Oh, my heart's like a cloud that the wind is chasing
O'er the earth's green blur with its silver tracing
To that sad France where there's someone waiting!

O Spring! begone with your too-sweet clover
And all your bees with honey to carry—
Come again when the war is over,
Come, dear Spring, when you bring my lover!
Yet come no more, should he tarry . . . tarry!

From the Trenches

OH, to be in Canada now that Spring is merry,
Happy apple blossoms gay against the smiling green;
Here the lilac's purple plume and here the pink of cherry,
Hillsides just a drift of bloom with clover in between!

Oh, to be in Canada! there's a road that rambles
Through a leafing maple-wood and up a windy hill,
Velvet pussy-willows press soft hands amid the brambles
Fringing round a sky-filled pool where cattle drink their fill.

Oh, to be in Canada! there's a farmhouse hidden
Where the hollow meets the hill and Spring's first footsteps show—
Not a drop of honey there to any bee forbidden,
Not a cherry on a tree but all the robins know!

Oh, to be in Canada, now that Spring is calling
Sweet, so sweet it breaks the heart to let its sweetness through,

Oh, to breast the windy hill while yet the dew
is falling—
Waking all the meadow-larks to carol in
the blue!

Smile upon us, Canada! None shall fail who
love you
While they hold a memory of your fields
where flowers are—
High the task to keep unstained the skies
that bend above you,
Proud the life that shields you from the
flaming wind of war!

The Reasons

THEY sat before a dugout
In the unfamiliar quiet of silenced guns.
And one said:
"Now that it's over
What about a bit of truth?
Let us say why we came to fight—
No frills—
You first, old Fire-eater!"—

One with a whimsical face spoke freely;
"I?—I sought some stir,
Some urge in living,
Some sense in dying.
I sought a mountain top
With a view!"

"And the answer?"

"I have seen others find
What I sought."

. . . . . .

"I don't know that it's anyone's business
Why I came,"
(Another spoke as if unwillingly),
"A girl laughed, I think—
Funny?—Yes, funny as hell!"—

. . . . . .

His neighbor said,
"I was a business man
No sentiment,

Nothing of that kind,—
But the band played
And, suddenly, I saw
My country,
A woman, with hands outstretched,
Her back to the wall——"

"U—um," they nodded,
"She's got a pull,
That old lady."

. . . . . .

"As for me," the speaker was abrupt,
"I was afraid!
I saw pictures,
I heard things—
I couldn't sleep
For the Beast that was abroad—
Fear!
That's what brought me!"

. . . . . .

They sat silent for a moment
In the sun.
Then an older man said briefly,
"We were all afraid . . . . .
. . . But what of hate?
Did no one come because of hate?"

. . . . . .

"Yes—I"—
They looked at this man
Curiously,

But he added nothing,
And no one questioned.

. . . . . .

A fresh-faced boy spoke modestly;
"Our family are all Army people—
So, of course—
And it's all over now.
We got through.
But it was a near thing—
What?"

To-Day

TO-DAY is a room
With windows upon one side
And upon the other
A door—
Through the windows we may look
But cannot pass;
Through the door we must pass
But cannot look,
And there are no windows
Upon that side.

Memory

A YEAR is a thief
Who comes in the guise of a friend
Saying, "Let us travel together,
We have much to give each other.
See, I hold back nothing—
For what is giving
Between friends?"

Yet when the year departs
He takes his gifts with him—
"Oh, Robber!" we cry,
Aghast and weeping,
"Nay," he replies, "I did but lend.
Still, for your weeping, I will leave you something.

It is not the real thing
But you may keep it always."

Dream

I SEE a spirit
Young and eager,
Beautiful, too, I think,
(Although I cannot see it clearly)
It is, by right of its own being,
One with all lovely, youthful things;
And they, its age-old kindred,
Welcome it
Saying, "Come, you too are one of us!"

. . . . . .

This spirit is my own happy ghost—
But I, myself,—alas!

Perhaps

THERE was a man, once, and a woman
Whose love was so entire
That an angel, watching them,
Said wistfully, "Would I were no angel
But a mortal,
Loving so, and so beloved!"
. . . . Yet, when these two mated,
A muddied drop, from some forgotten vial
of ancestry,
Brought them a child whose mind was dark;
Who lived—and never called them by their
names . . .
. . . . They tended her
For twenty years.
Only when she died
Did they weep, whispering,
"Why?"
The years could find no answer,
Though they went questioning
Until the end.

. . . . . .

Still wondering
They wandered out into the other coun-
try . . . .
It was lonely there,
Being parted from familiar things,
And there was no one to answer questions,
But, suddenly,

(As a wind blows or a swallow flies against
the sun)
Came a young girl—eager!
She ran to them,
Calling dear names,
(Names that would open heaven)
"Who are you?" they entreated, trembling . . . .
But they knew!—
Had they not dreamed her so
For twenty years?

Glamour

THE knowledge of love
Is like sudden sun upon a river—
The slipping water
Is instantly opaque and glorious.
No longer can we look into it
Counting the pebbles,
Watching the ribboned water-reeds,
Or searching idly
For that something which we lost
(A ring with gems)
It is all glamour, now!
We turn away, shading our eyes.

Friendship

I THOUGHT of friendship
As a golden ring,
Round as the world
Yet fitted to my finger;
I thought of friendship
As a path in spring
Where there are flowers
And the footsteps linger;
I thought of friendship
As a globe of light,
Yellow before the doorway of my life,
A flame diffused
Yet potent against night;
I thought—but thought itself in ruin lies
Since, yesterday, you passed with lowered eyes!

The Returned Man

THEY thought that he would come
back
Quieter,
Less boyish,
But still a hero with tales to tell.
So, when there were no tales,
Only blank silences—
When he lay for hours
Staring through leafing branches
And forgot them
Utterly—
They tried to arouse him, saying:
"The war is over."
But when he turned on them
His shadowed eyes
They stammered—
Knowing that they lied!

Epitaph

(For the unknown soldier buried in Westminster Abbey.)

YOU who died fighting
For me and my little children;
You who are a million
Yet are but one,
I lay upon your grave
A rose and a tear—
The tear is the world's sorrow,
The rose is your joy.

For One Who Went in Spring

SHE did not go, as others do,
With backward look and beckoning;
With no farewell for anything
She passed the open doorway through.

The little things she left behind
Lie where they fell from hands content—
Fame a forgotten incident
And life a season out of mind.

The spring will find her footstep gone,
But spring is kind to vanished things,
Camas and buttercups she brings
With green that tears have brightened on.

And we, who walked with her last year
While April in the lilacs stirred,
Will turn with sudden look or word—
Forgetting that she is not here.

"FIRES OF DRIFTWOOD," BY ISABEL ECCLESTONE MACKAY, WITH DECORATIONS BY J. E. H. MACDONALD, A.R.C.A., HAS BEEN PRODUCED FOR McCLELLAND & STEWART LIMITED, BY WARWICK BROS., & RUTTER, LIMITED, TORONTO.

The Shining Ship

"Fresh fish!" he cried, but the Moon-man said,
"I never eat fish when I'm going to bed."

—*The Wonderful Fishing of Peterkin Spray.*

THE SHINING SHIP AND OTHER VERSE

By

ISABEL ECCLESTONE MACKAY

Author of "Up the Hill and Over", "Fires of Driftwood", etc.

with Illustrations by
ELSIE DEANE

"Ah! she's the ship for me."

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"I wonder if he's lonely when we shut him out at night?" . 170
"Oh, I should like to buy the moon out of the sky." . . 173

THE SHINING SHIP

All day I see the ships sail in, the sun upon their spars,
And silently at night they pass between me and the stars,
Oh, many, many ships there be,
From Biscay Bay and China Sea!
But never comes a ship for me,
Across the flooding bars.

All day I watch the ships sail out, so brave and gallantly;
And while I sleep they sail away, impatient for the sea,
Strange ways are theirs, where strange winds blow,
Strange islands loom and strange tides flow—
But round and round the world they go
And never wait for me.

One day a shining ship shall ride at anchor by the quay;
From her slow-furling sails shall shake the scents of Araby;
She bears no name, she cannot stay;
But on her decks I'll sail away,
To China Sea and Biscay Bay—
Oh, she's the ship for me!

SPRING WAKING

A SNOWDROP lay in the sweet, dark ground.
"Come out," said the Sun, "come out!"
But she lay quite still and she heard no sound;
"Asleep!" said the Sun, "no doubt!"

The Snowdrop heard, for she raised her head,
"Look spry," said the Sun, "look spry!"
"It's warm," said the Snowdrop, "here in bed."
"O fie!" said the Sun, "O fie!"

"You call too soon, Mr. Sun, *you do!*"
"No, no," said the Sun, "Oh, *no!*"
"There's something above and I can't see through."
"It's snow," said the Sun, "just snow."

"But I say, Mr. Sun, are the Robins here?"
"Maybe," said the Sun, "maybe";
"There wasn't a bird when you called last year."
"Come out," said the Sun, "and see!"

The Snowdrop sighed, for she liked her nap,
And there wasn't a bird in sight,
But she popped out of bed in her white night cap;
"That's right," said the Sun, "that's right!"

And, soon as that small night-cap was seen,
A Robin began to sing,
The air grew warm, and the grass turned green,
" 'Tis Spring!" laughed the Sun, " 'tis Spring!"

"The Snowdrop sighed, for she liked her nap,
And there wasn't a bird in sight,
But she popped out of bed in her white nightcap;
'That's right,' said the Sun, 'that's right'."

THE WONDERFUL FISHING OF PETERKIN SPRAY

A FISHERMAN bold was Peterkin Spray,
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away.
And when he got there, he embarked once more
Down the path that leads to the Sun's back door.
"Ho, Ho," said the Sun, "here is Fisherman Spray,
But the cook doesn't need any salmon to-day."

"Too bad, Mr. Sun," said Peterkin Spray,
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away,
But the wind was so light that 'twas half past eight
When he called his wares at the Moon-man's gate.
"Fresh fish!" he cried, but the Moon-man said,
"I never eat fish when I'm going to bed."

"What a fussy old Moon!" sighed Peterkin Spray,
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away,
And when he got there, he exclaimed "My Stars!
I had almost forgotten to call on Mars."
"Fine fish," cried Mars and he smacked his lips,
"Charge a dozen or so to my next eclipse!"

"O dear, O dear!" sighed Peterkin Spray,
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away,
And when he got there, he declared, "I wish
I never, never had learned to fish.
For some won't buy and others won't pay,
And I'm tired, and tired of sailing away!"

"I know what I'll do!" said Peterkin Spray,
And he turned his boat down the Milky Way.
He opened the Dipper (yes, honest, he did!)
He popped in his cargo, and slapped down the lid.
"Here's a kettle of fish!" laughed Peterkin Spray.
And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away.

"And he sailed and he sailed and he sailed away."

NAUGHTY JOHNNIE FROST

Little Leaf," said young Jack Frost,
"Pretty Leaf," said he,
"Tell me why you seem so shy,
So afraid of me?
I protest I like you well—
In your gown of green
You're the *very sweetest* Leaf
I have ever seen!"

"Run away," said little Leaf,
"Prithee, run away!
I don't want to listen to
Anything you say.
Mother-tree has often said:
'Child, have naught to do
With young Johnnie Frost'—I think
That, perhaps, he's *you!*"

"Nay, believe me, little Leaf,
Pretty Leaf! Indeed
To such silly, idle tales
You should pay no heed!

I protest a leaf so fair
  Need not bashful be—
There's no reason why you should
  Feel afraid of me."

"Well, perhaps," said little Leaf,
  "I will let you stay—
If you're really very sure
  You mean all you say?
Do you truly like me *best*——"
  "Yes, oh *yes!*" he said,
"And, to prove it, pray accept
  This new dress of red!"

Very proud was little Leaf,
  Whispering with a smile,
" 'Tis a sweetly pretty gown,
  'Twill be quite the style!"
Then she chanced to glance around!
  "Oh!" and "Oh!" she said—
Every leaf upon the tree
  Wore a dress of red!

GARDEN RIVALS

Pansy in the garden-bed
To a Johnnie-jump-up said:
"Surely you are not connected
With the Pansy family tree?
You are much too small and sickly,
And your blossom fades too quickly—
Yet I heard some children saying
That they thought you *looked like me!*"

Johnnie-jump-up merely smiled:
"You are tame and I am wild,
But that there's a close resemblance
Any little child can see.
You are in the garden growing,
I, outside, still there's no knowing
But that you and I are cousins—
Nearer relatives, maybe!"

Said the listening Hollyhock:
"How you silly flowers talk!
I'm amazed such haughty spirit
In such humble things to see!
If you both were tall and graceful,
If you wore a dress as tasteful
As the one I wear, 'twere easy
To excuse your vanity!"

White Rose nodded to Rose Red,
"Did you notice that?" she said.
"Strange indeed, that homely flowers
Always boast how well they're dressed!
Did you hear the Wind say lately
'*Stiff* things always think they're *stately*
But for perfect grace and beauty
Give me—' you can guess the rest!"

"Doubtless he referred to me,"
Said Carnation Pink; "you see
Some are born to grace and beauty—
'Tis admitted by the wise—
And Carnation Pinks inherit
Beauty, with the grace to wear it—
Not that I would boast about it,
Only—well, just use your eyes!"

Larkspur timidly peeped out:
"What is all the strife about?
Every flower has some beauty—
Don't you think so? Why, then, fall
To debating with each other?
Some like one and some another—
One, I know (his taste is famous)
Likes the Larkspur best of all!"

A PROTEST

"I think it's queer that boys should be
Sent off to bed right after tea."

I THINK it's queer that boys should be
Sent off to bed right after tea
When it's so jolly out of doors
And there are lots and lots of chores
A boy could do—— I don't see why
They shouldn't be allowed to *try*.

The day's so full of things to do
I never seem to get quite through;
There are so many plays to play
The daylight seems to slip away—
Almost before I've quite begun
My bedtime comes to spoil my fun!

When I am big 'twill be all right
For then I'll stay up most all night—
But mother's big, and mother said,
"I wish that I could go to bed!
I feel so tired, little son,
I'm always glad when day is done."

(Wasn't that queer!) I said that she
Could go to bed instead of me,
But mother said, "That will not do—
Sleep is the thing for boys like you,
So you can grow up tall and strong
And never find the day too long."

"And will you take a long rest then,
And never, never work again?
When I'm a man will you be free
To go to bed right after tea?"
But mother only smiled and said
"Yes, dear—some time—now run to bed!"

THE WHITE CAP

One day a baby wave was born,
  Child of the tide was she,
Safe circled by the warm young morn
  And cradled in the sea.

And oh, it was a pleasant thing
  The bright new world to know,
To wonder at the gull's wet wing
  And why it sparkled so!

To smile back at the sky who sent
  A dress of dainty blue,
To thank the wind who chuckling lent
  A neat white cap or two.

Then came the kindly moon who gave
  A chain of jewels bright,
(For every little baby wave
  Wears shining things at night!)

And oh, 'twas just as sweet to lie
  Beneath the dancing stars,
To watch the glistening ships sail by
  With silver on their spars!

To chase the boats of fishermen
  And spatter them with spray,
To lift them high, so high! And then
  To laugh and run away!

'Twas harmless fun, but, whisper low,
  That cap the sly wind lent
Held magic and it made her grow
  Quite wild and turbulent.

So when the kind moon went away
  She took her diamonds too,
The angry sky grew cold and grey
  And took the dress of blue.

The naughty wave began to fear
  And sought her mother's lap—
"My child, the cause is very clear,
  Take off that saucy cap!"

And when the cap was off, the day
  Grew bright, the sky shone fair,
And fast asleep the wavelet lay
  With sunbeams in her hair!

FATHER'S VALENTINE

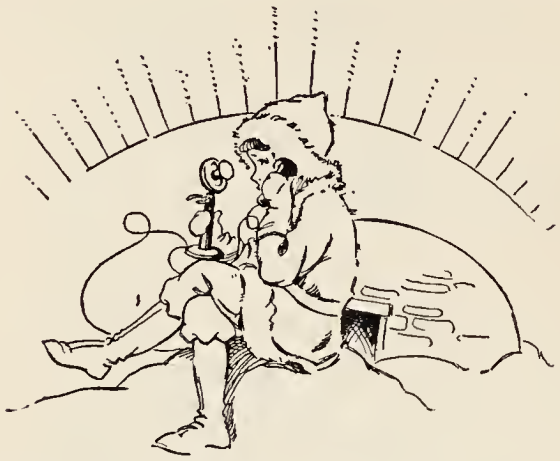
FATHER'S got the queerest Valentine!
It's the picture of a little girl
With her hair cut straight across her face,
Plastered down without a wave or curl.

If you'd see her stockings you would laugh,
For they're made with rings like barber's poles,
And she wears the oddest little frock,
With no neck or sleeves but only *holes*.

And I said, "Who is this little girl?
I won't have her for *my* Valentine."
Father laughed and said, "That's just as well—
Long ago she promised to be mine.

"Once I sent that child a sugar heart,
Saying, 'If you love me tell me so,'
And she ate it all—why, little son,
That was mother, thirty years ago!"

A VERY EXCEPTIONAL ESKIMO



"When he wishes his friends to come to dine
He calls them up on the Polar line."

SHALL I tell you a few of the things I know
Of a very exceptional Eskimo?
The tale I shall ask you to take on trust,
For strange things happen and always must,
And some of the strangest ever known
Occur far up in the Arctic Zone.

In the Arctic Zone by the Great North Pole
Lives this Eskimo, in a scooped-out hole
In a great snow-bank that is mountain-high—

If you reached the top you could touch the sky!—
But his clothes he views with a greater pride,
They are all white fur, with the fur inside.

When he wishes his friends to come to dine
He calls them up on the Polar Line
To say, "Please come at the hour of two
And partake of a dish of sealskin stew,
With codfish oil and a water-ice
And a blubber-pudding that's *very* nice!"

When he goes to ride, he starts his sleigh
And never stops for a whole long day—
Lickety-whiz-z-z! Down a slope of white!
And a reindeer carries him back at night,
While the polar bears from his path he warns
By blowing one of the reindeer's horns!

When he goes to bed it is not enough
To hide his nose in a bearksin muff,
But his ears he wraps, if it's very cold,
In a feather-bed, and I have been told
That he toasts his head—for it really seems,
If he didn't, the cold might *freeze his dreams!*

WHO TOLD?

"—Well I just up and winked at him!"

Our teacher says there aren't fairies now,
Nor ever was—except in silly talk.
She wouldn't b'lieve that yesterday I saw
A really one down by the river walk!

I did tho', and his eyes were green as green,
He swung (he swang, I mean), upon a limb,
And every swing he took he winked at me,
And I—well, I just up and winked at him!

Said he, "There was a boy who ran away
From school-recess this morning; are you he?"
He looked so nice and jolly that I thought
He wanted to be friends and said, "I be."

"And can you be the lad I heard about
Who carved a pumpkin-head and made a ghost,
To scare your little sister into fits?"
I said, "She always was more skeered than most."

"And did you tell your cousin Julia Ann,
To make her cry, that Santa Claus was dead?"
You bet I wasn't goin' to own to that,
"Aw now, you go an' chase yourself!" I said.

His twinkly eyes got all so sparkly green,
He grinned the widest grin I ever saw.
"I see," he chuckled. "You're a bad, bad boy,
I think, Horatius Jones, I'll tell your Maw!"

Now what d'ye think of that? When I went in,
Maw, she just sent me straight away to bed—
For playing truant and for scaring girls!—
"A little fairy whispered it," she said.

A SPRINGTIME WISH

O, TO be a robin
  In the Spring!
When the fleeting days of April
  Are a-wing,
And the air is sweet with knowing
Where the hidden buds are growing,
And the merry winds are going
  Wandering!

O, to be a robin
  With a nest
Built upon the budding branches—
  East or West!
Just to swing and sway and dangle,
Far from earth and all its tangle,
Joining in the gay bird-jangle,
  With a zest!

O, to be a robin
Just to sing!
Not to have the pain of hating
Anything—

"O, to be a robin, with a nest,
Built upon the budding branches
East or West!"

Just to race the foremost swallow
Over hill and over hollow—
And the joy of life to follow
Through the Spring.

LISTEN TO THE RAIN

LISTEN to the Rain!
Hear the merry sounds it makes
As it falls and slides and shakes
From the eaves into the street,
Where its million tiny feet
Hurry, hurry past the door,
Followed by a million more!

Listen to the Rain!
How it gurgles with delight,
Hurling from its dizzy height,
Falling straight and falling true,
Faster now and louder too—
See! The tardy drops and small
Cannot keep the pace at all!

Listen to the Rain!
Ah! It's angry now—I fear
'Tis a scolding voice you hear!
How it scolds the drooping trees,
How it scolds the languid breeze,
How it scolds the birds, poor things,
For the dust upon their wings!

Listen to the Rain!
If you listen hard you'll hear
How the skies grow cold and clear,
How the primrose lifts her head,

"Hear the merry sounds it makes
As it falls and slides and shakes
From the eaves into the street."

How the mountain brooks are fed,
How the earth grows sweet again
With the coming of the Rain!

THE RIVAL ARTISTS

"The only things that she can draw
Are pumpkin faces."

THIS is the way Elizabeth draws.
Isn't it funny?
That's a girl, she says, and she says that *this*
Is our white bunny!
Elizabeth's six and goes to school,
She makes the letter
"A" all right, but her "B's" like this
And her "C's" no better—

She makes a house stand on its steps
  Without a cellar,
And doesn't attend to me at all
  When I want to tell her
That houses never stand on steps
  (Or almost never).
She just goes on and makes a pig,
  The queerest ever!
The only things that she can draw
  Are pumpkin faces,
And even then the noses go
  In wrongest places.
Now I *can* draw. But teacher says
  I shouldn't scold her,
Perhaps she'll draw as well as me
  When she is older!

SUCH FUNNY THINGS

THEY teach such funny things in school!
I never say a word,
But when it's four o'clock I just
Can't b'lieve the things I've heard.

They say the earth is *round,* just like
A ball, and you can go
For miles and never find the edge
Though you try ever so!

They say that should you dig right through
The other side you'd find,
And lots of China boys and girls
With pig-tails down behind.

(One day I digged a 'normus hole
But, though I tried and tried
And digged and digged, I never came
Out on the other side).

They say the twinkly stars are not
Hung up by strings at all—
But then you know they *have* to be
Or else they'd surely fall!

THE SHINING SHIP

They say there isn't any sky
  Turned over like a bowl
And that the blue's not blue *at all*
  But just a big black hole.

And when the shiny sun goes down
  Like a great yellow ball
Into the sea at supper time,
  It isn't wet at all!

(But this, I think, is likely true,
  Because, beyond a doubt,
If it got very soaking wet
  Its fire would go quite out.)

They say I do not see the moon
  Move right across the sky—
But then, you know, I *do*, as they
  Can see as well as I!

O dear! they say such funny things,
  I'm hardly *sure* I'm me,
I hardly know the things I know
  Or see the things I see!

BEDTIME NOW!

"LITTLE leaves, go to bed!" said the Wind thro' the trees.
"If you stay out so long you will certainly freeze,
I come from the North and I know *what I know*—
Someone's coming this way with a capful of snow!"

Loud murmured the leaves, all a-flutter with dread,
"O dear Mother-tree, did you hear what he said?
But the sun is so bright and the sky is so blue—
He was teasing us, mother, it couldn't be true!

"Why 'twas only last week that we changed our green
gown
For this beautiful mixture—red, yellow and brown—
Go to bed in these clothes?—it just couldn't be done—
Please tell us, dear mother, 'twas but the Wind's fun!"

The Tree shook her head and 'tis sad but 'tis true,
Though she shook it so *gently, a* stray leaf or two
Grew giddy and fell and the Wind laughed "Ho-Ho!"
And gaily he flattened them out in a row.

"Come on," called the Wind and he swept a low bow,
"You'll have to come soon so you'd better come now;
Never mind your gay dress, what's a crease or a tear?
In the scheme of creation it's not here nor there!"

"Someone's coming this way
with a capful of snow!"

They fell and they fell, and they covered the ground
And the Wind caught them up and he danced them around
And he laughed a "Good-Night" as he clapped them in bed—
But the leaves were too sleepy to hear what he said!

SAILOR, TELL ME OF THE SEA

Sailor, tell me of the sea,
All the sights and sounds that be—
When the shore has slipped from sight
And the moon shines clear at night
And there is no wind at all,
Can you hear the mermaid's call?"

"Ay indeed! 'Tis like a bell,
Sweet and far across the swell
Of the long, cool waves, and soon
You can see them 'neath the moon
Smile and beckon—ay, you can
If you be a Sailor-man!"

"Wondrous, Sailor, is the sea!
Dreadful are the things that be!—
On a breathless day in June
Have you seen the great typhoon
Pounce with rending shriek and roar
On the ship it's waited for?"

"Mate was I, down China way,
When the typhoon seized her prey—
Ay, indeed!—The brig spun round
Like a top on level ground,
Then she lifted clear and free—
And plunged down into the sea!"

"Sailor, tell me, is it true
There's a sea no boat wins through,
Where the air is never stirred
By the rush of winging bird
And the drifted wrecks lie by
Rotting 'neath a burning sky?"

"Ay, 'tis true! But no man knows
Where that sluggish current flows!
Only dead ships find the place,
Ships that go and leave no trace—
Many drift on that last tack,
Never any ship comes back!"

"Sailor, Sailor! Speak to me,
Gaze not so across the sea!
Bright it glitters in the sun
And the day is just begun,
Far and white the sea-gulls fly—
Why sits terror in your eye?"

Slow the Sailor turned his head.
"On a day like this," he said,
"On a day like this, went down

"You can see them 'neath the moon
Smile and beckon—ay, you can
If you be a Sailor-man!"

My good ship the *London Town*—
Ay, and not less lost is she
For the smiling of the sea!"

OUR HILL

TEDDY and Jock and I play on a hill all day.
Its top goes up to the sky
And Teddy and Jock and I
Are sometime going to climb so high
We'll hear what the star-folk say!

Just us can play on the hill—nobody else would dare!—
Its feet slip into a lake,
And some fine day we'll take
Our luncheon of apples and Johnny-cake
And see what it's like down there.

There's a cave in the hill up there, so black it looks like blue!
It hasn't ever an end—
But some day we intend
To go right in and around the bend—
But it wouldn't be safe for you!

THE WISH

" 'Tis the one wish I wanted," said she.

A LEPRECAUN-FAIRY was pegging some shoes,
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
With long curly toes, like the court fairies use,
All red like the sumach, in pairs made of twos—
"For fear they'd be lonely," said he!

"O Shoemaker green, I have spied on you thrice!
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)

I have called your name once, I have called your name
twice,
And now, Mister Leprecaun, pay me my price!"
"Ah, sure, if ye wish it," said he.

"One wish ye may have for the sight of your eyes,
(And only one, mind ye," said he.)
"So take your time now, that the wish may be wise,
For a wish comin' true is a bit of surprise!"
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)

"And what if I wish for a big, golden ball?
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
And what if I wish for the blue sky to fall?
And what if I wish for the great world-and-all?"—
"Just be pleasin' your fancy!" said he.

"But, Leprecaun, dear, tell me what would *you* do?
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
For how can I know if the sky is real blue?
Is the world-and-all heavy? I'll leave it to you"—
" 'Tis a bit of a handful!" said he

"And how if you wanted a million of things?
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
If you longed for the rainbow and wished you had
wings,

And a gown of pink velvet and toffy in strings?"
"Sure, I think I'd go crazy!" said he.

" 'Tis plain ye can't choose," said the Leprecaun green,
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
"So, since I've no time for a shiftless colleen,
Sure, I'll give ye these shoes with a wish in between—
Ye'll find it there—maybe!" said he.

Ochone, and Ochone! He was up and away!
(Tickety, tackety, tee!)
And red as the sumach the fairy shoes lay
With the wish in between—and one fortunate day,
" *'Tis the one wish I wanted!*" said she.

SECRETS

How do you think they make the dew?
The wise men tell, but they don't tell true;
For they are so very, very wise
They can't see straight out of both their eyes;
And a drop of dew is a simple thing—
Just a pearl that slips from a fairy's wing.

How do you think they make the snow?
The wise men tell, but they don't know—
They are too wise to understand
That every flake is made by hand,
Yet of ninety million and seventy-three
Each one is made quite differently.

How do you think they make the rain?
The wise men tell, but they don't explain
That a rainstorm isn't a storm at all,
But just the fairies playing ball—
Now listen hard and you'll surely hear
Them laugh and gurgle and call and cheer!

And the frost—why, some wise folk insist
That frost is merely a frozen mist;
They are so wise that they cannot trace
The wonderful weaving of fairy lace.
But look at the windowpane, my dear,
And you will see it as clear as clear.

Now these are secrets—if you tell
Be sure you look about you well
To see that no wise men are near,
For they would say "Ahem!" I fear,
And if they said "Tut, tut!" that way,
You'd be as wise and blind as they!

BIG SISTER'S VALENTINE

"Why did she put Ned's coat on me
And laugh and say she 'didn't see'?"

THE house seems wrongside out to-day,
Big sister acts the *queerest* way!
At breakfast father said, "My dear,
This tea is somewhat weak, I fear."
And sister said, "I quite forgot
To put the tea into the pot!"
Then when she heard the baby fret
She said, "Whatever's wrong, my pet?"

It took some time for her to think
She'd put no sugar in his drink.
She made Bob's lunch for him, but why
Did she forget to put in pie?
Why did she put Ned's coat on me
And laugh and say she "didn't see"?
Yet all the time she looked so kind
And smiled so nice we didn't mind.
I said quite low to father—"Say,
What makes big sister queer to-day?"
He whispered back, "Small son of mine,
Big sister's got a Valentine!"

HOP-SCOTCH

All day I play at Hop-Scotch
And hop and hop and hop,
And when I go to bed at night
I dream I cannot stop,

"—just one tired little girl
Hopping and hopping there!"

And all the world and everything
Is one big hop-scotch square,
With just one tired little girl
Hopping and hopping there!

THE RUDE BOY

THERE's a boy that goes to school,
  Billy Jenkens is his name,
And he's just the rudest tease!—
  All the girls think it's a shame.

If a girl has got red hair,
  He calls "Fire!" If she's fat
And has freckles on her nose
He calls "Seedcake!" just like that!

Oh he is a nawful boy,
  I just never look at him—
And to-day he called at *me*
  "Clear the way—here comes *Miss Prim!*"

THE DUTCH-CUT

"She just simply won't believe
Curls aren't stylish any more "

OH! If *I* could only have
Dutch-cut like the other girls!
Every time I ask for it
Mother says, "What! Spoil your curls?"

Then she wonders why I hide
In behind the parlour door,
She just simply won't believe
Curls aren't stylish any more!

THE NEW CLOAK

"Oh, dear me, it's quite too bad
Teachers make a girl so shy!"

AFTER school I went to walk
Down a street quite far away
And I wore the new blue cloak
Mother finished just-today.

Teacher's house is in that street
And I thought perhaps if she
Just should meet me—or if I
Should meet her, how nice 'twould be!

Then—I saw her—and I hid
  Round a tree till she went by—
Oh dear me, it's quite too bad
  Teachers make a girl so shy!

LITTLE WONDERS

I'D LIKE to know the whisp'ry things
  The trees say to each other
And what the stars mean when they laugh
  And wink at one another.

I'd like to see *inside* the dark
  That girls are so afraid of,
I'd like to feel the velvet stuff
  The summer sky is made of—

It looks so soft and thick and blue
  With not a wrinkle through it,
The fairies iron it, perhaps,
  I wonder how they do it?

I wonder if the noisy brook
  Is cross or only playing—
The birdies chatter all day long,
  I wonder what they're saying!

The cow that jumped above the moon—
  Did it fall down inside it?

THE SHINING SHIP

It must be there somewhere, you know,
  Where does the moon-man hide it?

Does that cow give the milk that makes
  The milky-way, I wonder,
And when it bellows loud, is that
  What makes the rumbly thunder?

O dear! There's lots of things to know,
  But though big folks are clever
And though I ask and ask all day
  They never tell me—*never!*

THE WORM TURNS

A NAUGHTY child just pulled me out of bed.
"O what an ugly, squashy worm!" he said,
And he meant me!—
'Tis strange how ignorant a child can be.

I "squashy"?—I, so gently born and bred,
That rose-leaves make a pillow for my head,
While in the heart
Of some sweet bud I watch its petals part?

And "ugly"?—I, so slim, so full of grace
That when my silky length is coiled in place,
Brown row on row,
A finer sight no summer day can show.

I wish that I might take these children rough
And show them where I live! 'Twould be enough
To make them stare
In wonder and amazement and despair—

No child that lives has such a home as I!
For roof it has a bit of bluest sky
So that the rain
And dew and sun peep in and out again.

THE SHINING SHIP

Its walls are hung with crimson and its floor
Is strewn with golden pollen, and its door,
All made of green,
Is just the daintiest portal ever seen!

My food is delicate. I daily fare
On crumpled petals, dew-steeped, very rare—
Oh, happy I!—
Until some naughty little child comes by!

JACOB UNRECOGNIZED

One day when I was lyin' in the grass
  Watchin' the little clouds a-sailin' by,
I saw a Jacob's ladder all of gold,
  It started from a hole up in the sky.

I was so scared an angel might come down
  I wriggled in the grass and lay quite flat—
You see, I ain't as good as I could wish,
  An' angels don't jes' take to boys like that.

When I got home I told my Maw, because
  I thought that she'd be int'rested—but pshaw!
She jes' gave me a look an' said, "My son,
  Don't go a-tellin' fibs to fool yer Maw!"

Now, Jacob's Maw b'lieved every word he said,
  An' told the neighbours an' made quite a stir,
And got it put in the Old Testament—
  But my Maw—why, you jes' can't int'rest her!

LITTLE BLUE-EYED FLOWER

Little Blue-eyed Flower
  Grows amid the clover,
Bees and birds the long day through
  Hum and flutter over.
"Dearie me!" sighs Blue-eyed Flower,
  "If I only had the power
Just to fly and fly and fly—
  Who would be as gay as I?"

Little Blue-eyed Flower
  Hears the water going
Singing through the meadow-brook,
  Sees it flowing—flowing!
"Dearie me!" sighs little Flower,
  "If I only had the power
Just to flow to meet the sea—
  Then I would contented be."

Little Blue-eyed Flower!—
  When the sun is setting
Red behind the distant hills
  You can hear her fretting.

"Dearie me!" sighs little Flower,
"If I only had the power
To be big and round and bright
Then the world would be all right."

Little Blue-eyed Flower—
As the days go by her
Sighs for something far away,
Something stronger, higher,
"Dearie me!" sighs little Flower,
"If I *only* had the power!"
So all day she sits and cries
All the blue out of her eyes!

Little Blue-eyed Flower,
Sighing in the clover,
He who made you what you are
Will not make you over.
But, bethink you, little Flower
Is it true you have no power?
What about your golden cup
Where a honey-bee may sup?

THE WIND FAIRY

"Or dance in the dust of the long white road
With a swirl of bewildered leaves!"

THERE's a fairy lives in the heart of the Wind,
Like the mermaids live in the sea,
Her face she hides but you hear her sing
"Ou-ee, Ou-ee, Ou-ee!"

When the Autumn comes and the days are grey
And the Wind rides wild and high,

She leaps to the back of an eager cloud
And gallops across the sky.

Then down she swoops with a shrill "Ho, ho,"
To whistle and call in the eaves,
Or dance in the dust of the long white road
With a swirl of bewildered leaves!

With the soft West Wind she has songs to sing
Of countries far and fair,
And she calls to the birds with a word so sweet
That they follow her everywhere.

When the stars peep out on a summer's night
She strays o'er the garden grass,
And the blue-bells ring and the roses sway
And jostle to see her pass.

But her voice is sad when the rain-wind blows;
Like a child who is left alone
She sighs all day to the whispering brook
And sobs in an undertone.

One day she came to the nursery door,
And rattled the latch and cried!
And tossed a leaf at the windowpane,
Till I opened the window wide.

THE SHINING SHIP

I felt her pass—and the curtains swayed
And the pictures stirred on the wall
But when I had shut the window, quick—
She was not in the room at all!

I followed her out through the garden gate,
I followed across the stream,
Then I followed her back—and in bed that night
I followed her into a dream.

I dreamed of a fine tea-party, spread
High up on a tossing tree,
With a nice white cloud for a table-cloth
And the Wind Fairy pouring tea!

THE VALENTINE REGAINED

"Why, it's my Valentine you've found!"
was what my mother said.

WAY high up in the attic-room where me and Billy play,
There's lots and lots of lovely things that mother's put away,
And if we're good as good can be, why, we can have most all we see.

To-day we found a *curyus* box, the lock of it was gone,
And inside was a picture card with funny writing on,
"O fairest Jane, my heart is thine, accept from me this Valentine."

Billy, he didn't care for it but I thought it was sweet.
The picture was an angel-one with clouds wrapped round its feet.
From what it said inside 'twas plain the angel must have been called Jane.

I went straight down where mother was, to let her have a look,
Before I pasted it away in my new pasting-book,
But, when my mother saw it, she just took it right away from me.

She looked so funny and her face got such a lovely red,
"Why, it's my Valentine you've found!" was what my mother said,
And then she hid away her eyes, just like our Billy when he cries.

Only a minute though and then she smiled so sweet at me,
"Oh, what a puzzled face!" she said and took me on her knee—
"Why, mother's name was Jane, you know, Oh long and long and long ago!"

SUNSET CITY

Sunset City lies along Twilight's smooth, grey sea,
And a river wanders there,
Flowing from no man knows where—
Swiftly, silently!

Glitt'ring palaces outline where the river flows,
Citadels without a name
Silhouette their towers in flame—
Crimson, gold and rose.

Quiet streets wind up and up to a magic height,
And the wond'ring eyes behold
Pavements of aerial gold
Delicate as light.

From the stately battlements banners flaunt and fall,
Lances gleam and pennons float,
(Hark! was that a bugle note?
Or a wild bird's call?)

Stately galleons anchor there in the Twilight sea,
Tyrian purple are their sails
And their decks are piled with bales
Wonderful to see.

Why these silent fleets sail in none has ever said—
Do the fairies come to buy
When the stars are in the sky
And we're safe in bed?

"Sunset City lies along
Twilight's smooth, grey sea."

Ah, if you would answer that, you must find the way
To this lovely Sunset Town
With the river winding down
To the close of Day!

THE CRY-BABY

"O ME, O my!"
Sighed the April sky,
"My tears go pitter-patter,
Yet why 'tis so
I do not know—
For there's not a thing the matter!

"I am really gay,
In an April way,
But, should I indulge in laughter,
(O my, O me!)
There is sure to be
A terrible shower after!

"I should love to smile
Just a little while,
For the robins sound so cheery!
But my eyes of blue
Have scarce peeped through
Before they are dull and teary.

"I fairly hate
To be thought sedate
And fickle and fond of sighing—
And the world won't see
(O my, O me!"
That it's not my fault I'm crying.

"For the fact appears
That without my tears
There'd not be a green thing showing,
And an April sky
Has to cry and cry
Just to start the earth a-growing!"

THE BALLAD OF THE FOUR YOUTHS

A YOUTH to the hilltop glanced and said,
"The summit's the place for me,
And day by day I shall force my way
To the height that I dimly see.
And nothing shall charm me to turn aside,
And nothing shall turn me back—
Not even a heed for another's need
Or care for another's lack.

"For there're very few folk on the hilltop,
And millions of men below—
When a man would reign, what's a little pain?
It isn't *his* pain, you know!"

A youth to the hilltop glanced and said,
"There is room at the top. I see,
In this crowded race, 'tis the only place
For a sensitive chap like me!
When the people learn of my just desert
They'll bring me the gilded car,
Which is all I need to attain with speed
The place where the laurels are.

"For there're very few folk on the hilltop,
And nothing at all to do,
'Twill be quite my line just to sit and shine
And praise the extensive view!"

A youth to the hilltop glanced and said,
"I crave for the purer air
And the bright light and the wider sight
And the peace which is found up there!
I shrink from the roar of the market-place
And the folk that I mix with here—
I am rare and fine and my soul can't shine
In so murky an atmosphere.

"For there're very few folk on the hilltop,
The crowd you can leave by the way,
And to worship art as a thing apart
Is to be of a finer clay."

A youth to the hilltop glanced and said,
"I'll aim for the highest seat,
But how fine 'twould be could I take with me
The dozens of friends I meet!"

But *he* never sat in the seat he craved,
For he wasted time on a song,
And he cleared the road and he bore a load
For a traveller not so strong.

For there're very few folk on the hilltop,
And millions of men on the plain,
And another's need interferes with speed,
With nothing but love to gain.

MOTHER'S SONGS

Our mother sings quite different songs
From those we learn at school
And we all think that mother's songs
Are nicer as a rule—

There's one quite lovely one that tells
About "Sweet Ella Rhree,"
And one of "Darling Nellie Gray,"
And one of "Rosa Lee."

And one about a "Minstrel Boy,"
Who to the war has gone,
And all about his father's sword
That he has girded on.

There's one about "Toll, Toll the Bell,"
(For dark-eyed laughing Nell),
And one called "Swinging in the Lane,"
I like it specially well.

Another one goes very high
About an "Evening Star,"

And "Blue Alsatian Mountains," too,
(I wonder where they are!)

In fact the songs we sing at school
Are just plain everyday,
But all the songs that mother sings
Seem far and far away!

THE ATTIC WINDOW

"For every single way you look
Is like a fairy picture-book."

Of all the windows in our house,
I like the attic window best;
Because it's high and small and round,
And oh, so different from the rest!
For every single way you look
Is like a fairy picture-book!

Such lovely things there are outside!
  Red chimney-stacks, and near, blue sky,
And fat cats walking on the roofs,
  And baby cloudlets skipping by;
And pigeons cooing on the sill,
So I can stroke them, if I will!

The smoke plumes from the chimney-stacks
  Are banners waving to and fro,
While gallant knights, with prancing steeds,
  Through the long roof-lanes come and go.
The clouds at sunset often hold
Great palaces of shining gold.

The wind comes rushing 'round the eaves,
  Shakes the loose catch, and cries, "How do?"
Then whirls away to chase the birds
  And tumble down a nest or two;
But though he's rough as he can be,
He always has a laugh for me.

The sun steps in and cries, "Hello!
  Here's just the place I'm looking for!"
He sees my books upon the shelf,
He sees my toys upon the floor—
And then he sees *me* sitting there,
And runs warm fingers through my hair.

THE SHINING SHIP

Just think! if some day I should be
  A great white bird with beating wing,
And from my window fly away
  Over the edge of everything,
Oh, wouldn't it be fine to know
Where all the summer daytimes go!

MEHITABLE ANN

"Something away inside of me
Just loves Mehitable Ann."

I LOVE Mehitable Ann!
Last night my sister said:
"Mehitable Ann is far from new;
I'd put her away if I were you—
Love Princess Pry instead!"

But I love Mehitable Ann!
And I *can't* love Pry instead.
If Mehitable's cheeks are pale and white
They lost their red that awful night
The puppy chewed her head.

And I love Mehitable Ann!
  She can't help being thin,
And there isn't a single reason why
She can't be as plump as Princess Pry
  If I put more sawdust in.

The Princess Pry is nice;
  And so is teeny Nan—
She's in-de-struct-i-ble, too, you see—
But something away inside of me
  Just *loves* Mehitable Ann!

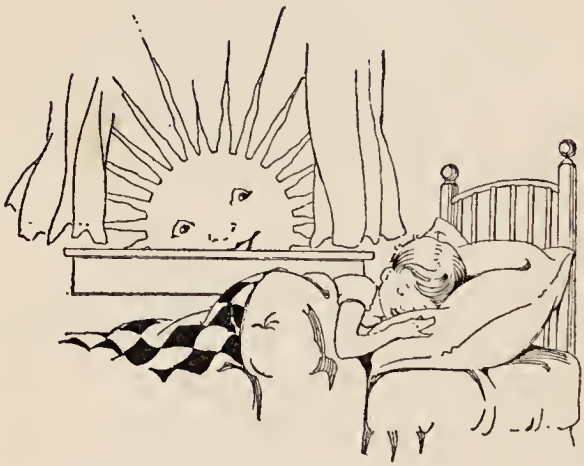
THE MORNING SUN

I LIKE the sun of afternoon
So golden and so mellow;
I like the sun who goes to bed
Wrapped up in red and yellow;
But I don't like the morning sun,
I never get my dream-thinks done—
He's such a saucy fellow!

When I am just, say, half awake,
He's at my window peeping,
And, though I shut my eyes hard-tight,
I feel him coming, creeping
Across the carpet to my bed,
No matter how I turn my head,
It means "good-bye" to sleeping!

He dances on my eyes, and shouts
"Hi, there! get up this minute!
There's something doing out of doors;
Look sharp! *You* won't be in it!
I do so hate to hear you snore.
The birds are up this hour or more—
Hark! Don't you hear that linnet?"

Now that might be all right, you know,
If one were really lazy;
But when one only likes to lie
With thoughts all dreamy-hazy



"When I am just, say half awake,
He's at my window peeping."

And misty-queer, it seems a sin
To have that Mr. Sun dance in
To drive a person crazy!

WHILE GETTING WELL

A LITTLE bird sits on my window-sill
And winks his eye at me and says, "Hello!
Sick, are you? Why, whatever's wrong?
I'm never sick, you know!"

And, just at breakfast-time, in comes the Sun
To make queer wiggly patterns on the wall
And laugh and say, "Oh, lazy-bones, get up!
You are not sick *at all!*"

And when I shut my eyes I hear the brook
Calling and calling as it hurries by—
I *can't* lie still! I'm hot and *mis'rable*—
I'm 'fraid I've got to cry!

The leaves just whisper, whisper all the time!
The little clouds all hurry by so quick!—
And nothing seems to care a speck about
A little child that's sick!

Oh! Here's the Wind! How cool his fingers are!
He steals across the bed and feels my hands
And my hot head, and doesn't say a word—
I think *he* understands!

THE TELL-TALE

"And when she tucked us up in bed,
'A little birdie told!' she said."

We used to like the little birds,
We thought them good and kind;
We never took a single egg
('Less we left lots behind),
And every morning me and Bill
Put crumbs upon the window-sill!

There was a Robin used to hop
Right close beside our door,

He'd cock his saucy head and say:
"Please, boy, I want some more,"
And I would say: "Here's more for you
And some for Mrs. Robin, too."

But one day Bill and me went down
To paddle in the stream
And fell splash in! We'd sense enough
To know we mustn't scream.
And when we'd dried our clothes quite well
You couldn't hardly, poss'bly tell!

But when we both got home that night
Our mother knew it all.
She knew how we'd been *soakin'* wet,
And how we came to fall—
And when she tucked us up in bed,
"A little birdie told!" she said.

Bill thinks it was the Robin, and
He feels just mighty sore;
He says: "That bird can get his crumbs
At some one else's door!"
I—just can't hardly b'lieve that he
Would go and *tell* on Bill and me!

THE MERCHANTS

I AM the Frost.
I'll show you diamonds, laces and tapestries
Of all variety at lowest cost;
Weavings of chaste design
Perfect in every line;
Connoisseurs surely will buy of the Frost.

I am the Dew.
Notice my elegant bracelets and necklaces,
All of rare quality; pearls not a few;
Emerald and amethyst;
Opal all rainbow kissed;
Ladies rise early to buy of the Dew.

I am the Snow.
Let me display for you carpets most exquisite.
Choicest of bordering also I show,
Heavy and soft and white,
Spread in a single night;
Folk who have wisdom will buy of the Snow.

I am the Rain.
Something I'll show you priceless and wonderful,
Making these offers seem tawdry and vain!
'Tis but a cloak of grey—
Wrapping the world away—
Happy the few who will buy of the Rain.

I DO! DON'T YOU?

"I like Spring-time best—don't you?"

"SUMMER," said the humming Bee,
"Summer is the time for me!
  Richest fields of luscious clover,
  Honey-cups all brimming over,
Not a cloud the long day through!
I like Summer best—don't you?"

Said the dainty Primrose sweet:
"Summer is the time of heat.
  In the Spring when birds are calling
  And the crystal rain is falling

All the world is cool and new!
I like Springtime best—don't you?"

Said the Apple: "Not at all,
There's no season like the Fall!
  Golden skies thro' soft mist glowing
  Where the golden-rod is growing,
Reaping done and harvest through—
I like Autumn best—don't you?"

Said the Holly: "It is clear
Of all seasons of the year
  Winter is the best and dearest,
  Winds are stillest, skies are clearest—
Snowballs, sleighrides, Christmas—whew!
I like Winter best—*don't you?*"

MISTRESS SPRING-IN-A-HURRY

Dearie O me! I am quite a flutter,
I've forgotten to churn the new butter-cup's butter,
I've forgotten to set all the lily-bells ringing,
I've forgotten to tune up the robins for singing,
Dearie O me, and Dearie O my!
Was ever a Springtime so flustered as I?

Come, Mr. Sun, shine a little bit hotter,
Don't hide your face, please, and stop drinking kater;
Mr. Wind, get out your big broom for sweeping,
Shame, Madam Rain! this is no time for weeping,
Come now, look pleasant, the swift hours fly,
Shake out your cloudlets and hang them to dry!

Young Johnnie Frost, you run home and remember
You're not wanted here till sometime next November,
Ha, now we have it!—a little more green,
Brighten that yellow, slip pink in between,
Don't talk to me about colours that blend,
Slap them all on, 'tis the same in the end.

Send up the Mayflowers, sweet smelling piles of them,
Catkins and marsh-mallows, I can use miles of them,

Shake all those lazy trees, tickle their toes—
Don't plant hypaticas stiffly in rows,
Jumble them up a bit, crimson and blue ,
Wind-flowers, violets, trilliums too!

That's the idea! and now for the gardens—
Poke up the hyacinths ere the soil hardens,
Mass purple lilacs down there by the walk,
Line up the daffodils here—and don't talk—
Rainbow-hued crocuses, narcissus white,
Soak all in perfume and leave over night.

Here come the birds! What a stirring and questing,
Fat robins chirping and bob-o-links nesting,
Gay sparrows chattering, meadow-larks racing—
Swift as the shade of the clouds they are chasing—
Green on the hillside and gold in the sky!
Was ever a Springtime so sprightly as I?

THE NIGHT LIGHT

"For the pale little flame had flown away."

When there is no moon,
And the night is still;
And the window opens
On the dark hill,
And the little fairy,
Flying by,
Can look into my window
And see me as I lie.

All through the hours,
  No matter how late,
A slim light burns
  On a pale gray plate.
It makes a little circle
  Round as round,
Light on the ceiling,
  Shadow on the ground.

When I sleep and dream,
  When I wake and see,
The little night-light
  Is there by me.
It makes no noise,
  Yet it seems to sing—
A far-off sound
  Like a beating wing!

When the white stars dim
  And the East grows bright
All that is left
  Of my little night-light
Is a ring of wax
  On a plate of gray—
For the pale, little flame
  Has flown away!

MEMORY

O MOTHER, listen!
Was I once a bird?
Did my bright wings glisten?
Have I ever heard,
When the dusk was falling,
The clear, far note
Of another bird, calling?

O listen, mother!
Was I once a bee?
Sometime or other
Was life to me
Just a purple clover,
With glow-worm stars
When day was over?

O mother, hold me!
What have I been
That you have not told me?
What have I seen,
'Twixt a dream and waking,
That has left in my heart
This beautiful aching?

WHEN I COME SINGING

I KNOW a Song that is all my own singing—
But the Birds and the Bees and the Wind and Bells ringing

Cry: "Where did you find it? It can't be a new one—
We know every song and we never gave *you* one!"

Droned the Bee with a bumble: "Is your song like mine is?
I lost one today on the hill where wild thyme is."

"And I," piped the Lark, "left one hid in the clover,
Perhaps your song is mine—will you please hum it over?"

"No need," tolled the Bell, "all intelligent people
Know a song is no song 'till it's rung from a steeple."

"Mine is!" snapped the Cricket, so cross his eyes glistened,
"I'm *sure* she hid under a grass-blade and listened!"

"Oh!" gurgled the Rain, "I am all pit-a-patter—
This stealing of songs is a serious matter!"

"Perhaps it was lent," lisped the Brook, "though I doubt it—
Let the child give it back and say no more about it."

"She has nothing to give!" spoke the Poplar, unbending,
"Pray pay no attention—the child's just pretending."

"Pretending or not!" boomed the Wind, "as the Leader
Of Madam Earth's Chorus I say *we don't need her!*"

Oh dear! They're so jealous! They don't like my knowing
A Song all my own. But I do—and it's growing!

TYLER'S LANE

One day when I went walking
  Down there in Tyler's lane,
I found a cur'yus pathway
  That was never there again.

I wish I could remember
  Which way the pathway led
But every time I try, it seems
  To hide behind my head.

I know it had strange flowers,
  Its birds were strange and shy,
And there I passed a little child
  Who seemed as strange as I.

His eyes were like the eyes of birds
  That always have been free—
I did not speak to him at all,
  He did not speak to me,

But, suddenly, I seemed to know
  Something I had forgot—

And now I never can be sure
  Whether I did or not!

(I'd almost think I dreamed it,
  Only I lost my hat—
A quick wind came and blew it off—
  You can't dream things like that!)

I like my little playmates,
  I like my brother Jim,
But when I find that stranger child
  I'd rather play with him!

Perhaps, if I just wait around,
  The path will come again—
That's why I often go to walk
  Down there in Tyler's lane.

SOMEONE ABROAD!

THERE is Someone abroad
Who is it that passes
O'er winter-bleached grasses
With sandals green-shod?
Who frees with His fingers
The brown willow-pod?

Who sets the brooks flooding,
The daffodils budding,
Who stirs the new sod?
Oh, there's Someone abroad—
See, snowdrops are showing
The way of His going
And wind-flowers nod—

And listen, the heralds!
The sounds of His coming,
The flutes in the thicket,
The singing, the humming—
The wind beats the willows
Like the cymbals together,

And Aaron's dry rod
Is a-flush with green feather—
Oh, Someone's abroad!

"Who sets the brooks flooding,
The daffodils budding?"

. . . . . .

Who is it? Who is it?
Why surely—'tis God.

BY THE POTTAWATAMIE

By the Pottawatamie,
Long ago, there used to be
Little Indian girls and boys
Playing with their Indian toys.

Where the birch tree, slim and pale,
Gleamed like silver by the trail,
They would play the long day through,
Fashioning a swift canoe—

For these Indian children made
Everything with which they played,
And the making was such fun
They were sorry when 'twas done—

Where the tall reeds bent and swayed,
And the river's haste delayed
By the wild-fowl's hidden nest,
Here was store of wealth unguessed.

Here they gathered plumage rare
To adorn their pig-tailed hair,
Quills to thread in chinking strings,
Pliant grass to braid for slings.

They could mimic beast and bird,
Trail the swiftest thing that stirred,
Scratch strange pictures on the sands,
Catch the fishes in their hands.

Meal-time meant just things to eat,
No one said "*Please wipe your feet!*"
Clothes, of course, they never wore—
Save a string done up before.

In the lovely autumn days,
When the woods were full of haze,
And the leaves came drifting down
Into rustling heaps of brown,

They would hush their whoops of glee
And, all swift and silently,
Through the thinning shade would glide,
Playing who could longest hide—

Not a whispering leaf must tell
Where a creeping footstep fell,
Not a trembling twig must sway
Lest it point the secret way!

One thing only did they miss
(Yes, I am *quite* sure of this!)

Not a single school was there,
Not a school-book anywhere!

They could see the heron wing,
Watch the winter yield to spring,
Wonder at the stars at night,
But they could not read nor write.

Did they wash their faces? Well
That is hardly fair to tell,
For they had no soap, you see,
By the Pottawatamie!

NUMBERS

NUMBERS are the queerest things!
Marching round and round in rings—
  Some—like 1—so tall and straight,
  Some all round and fat—like 8.

I like numbers, and I know
Every one, as far as twelves,
But the thing that puzzles me
Is the way they add theirselves!

One and one add up to two—
But I wonder why they do?
  Why do 2 and 1 make 3
  When they're different as can be?

Taking two away from four
(If you're mean enough) leaves two—
But if that two goes away
Then there's nothing left but you!

Numbers are the queerest things!
Marching round and round in rings—
  Numbers are alive, I think,
  Look at 5 and see him *wink!*

THE KINGDOM OF THE SPRING.

HEIGH ho, the Robin and the Spring!
The prating and the mating and the building nests a-swing,
The fields of budding clover with the soft sky bending over,
The bob-o-link's clear calling and the lark upon the wing!

Heigh ho, the Primrose and the Spring!
The growing and the blowing and the earthy scents that cling
To the lily breaking cover like a lass to meet her lover,
And the bloomy gold of butter-cups to make the wedding ring!

Heigh ho, the Children and the Spring!
The dreaming and the gleaming and the green on everything.
Every branch you peep in under shows a world of hidden wonder—
All the woodland is a Kingdom with a little child for king!

THE RAINBOW

The fairies built a bridge
From Here to Far-Away—
Of gossamer and mist,
Upon an April day
The fairies built a bridge
As shining as a tear,
As lovely as a dream,
From Far-Away to Here.

They borrowed from the sun,
They bargained with the moon,
A million dyes they stole
From gardens rich with June;
With crystal of the rain,
With sapphire from the sea,
With turquoise from the sky
They built it cunningly.

Then, lest some alien step
Its shining arch might scale,
They hid each rainbowed end
In Opal-tinted veil—
And never, through the years,
On any April day,
Has mortal crossed the bridge
From Here to Far-Away.

AT FIVE

This morning I woke up at five
And nothing seemed to be alive!
I couldn't find my voice to speak,
Even the bed springs wouldn't squeak—

There was no sound at all—The room
Was crowded full of cold, grey gloom—
It pressed up close beside my bed
And made strange singings in my head.

Then someone shrilly shouted, "Whoa!"
And all the strangeness seemed to go—
I never felt so glad before
To hear the milkman at the door!

LITTLE BLUE EGG

"That bird kept right on scolding us."

ONE day we found a little nest
With one blue egg, so small
We had to lift it out to see
If 'twas an egg at all
Or just a bit of bluest sky
Dropped in there by mistake—
We didn't hold it tight, of course,
For tightness makes eggs break.

And all the time, the mother bird
Made such a dreadful fuss—
'Twas just as if she couldn't trust
Her nice blue egg with us!
And though we put it back at once
And Ann said, "Sorry", too,
That bird kept right on scolding us—
I can't see why, can you?

THE FAIRY'S SISTER

One day when the wind rode high,
  Suddenly I missed her!—
In bright battalions from the sky
A host of singing leaves swept by—
Then the wind was still—but I
  Could not find my sister!

Round this mortal world, so old,
  I have sought her, calling,
Where pink-petaled dawns unfold
Where the blue ice cracks with cold,
Where the full moon hides her gold
  And the stars are falling!

By the ways of Here and There
  I have searched, unbidden,
Climbed the sinking sun's bright stair,
Told her name to every air,
Echoed it in caverns where
  Purple night lies hidden!

Never has she answered me,
  Not with song nor sighing—

Can such utter silence be
With a bird on every tree,
With the singing of the sea
  And a white gull crying?

Help me, children, mortal-born!
  Help me, lark and swallow,
Should you meet a sprite forlorn,
Hair like tassel of the corn,
Blow the honeysuckle's horn—
  I will hear and follow!

CLEARING

"It is going to clear!" said the thrush to the jay,
"There's a hole in the clouds and the suns coming through,"
And "Look how the grey is all patterned with blue,
Oh, it's going to clear!" trilled the bob-o-link gay.

The rush by the river shook lightly its spear,
The shining trees shivered the rain-drops away
And, high o'er the billowing, sweet-smelling hay,
A meadow-lark sang "It is going to clear!"

TIGER!

"Some day when I am grown up tall,
I'll step on him!—you'll see."

THERE is a TIGER in our hall—
He lies so flat and still
He never seems to move at all,
But, some time, p'r'aps he *will!*

He never turns his head when I
Come downstairs on tiptoes,
Nor ever looks as I pass by,
But every time *he knows*—

He knows when I come in from play
  And when I go to bed,
He knows the things I want to say
  And everything I've said.

One day I said: "I'm not afraid
  Of any old, dead skin!"
And, though no slightest sound he made,
  I felt that Tiger grin!

Some day, when I am grown up tall,
  I'll *step on him!*—you'll see,
I'll teach that Tiger in our hall
  He's not the boss of me!

NOBODY KNOWS

Nobody knows
Where Today goes—
When its bright hours
Darken and close,
Gently it slips
Out of our ken,
But if we ever
Shall greet it again
Nobody, nobody knows!

Nobody knows
Whence the Wind blows—
Somewhere it must
Have a home, I suppose;
Somewhere to store
All the salt of the sea
And the sweets of wild flowers,
But where it may be
Nobody, nobody knows!

Nobody knows
Why the grass grows—
Hidden all winter
Beneath the cold snows,
Sudden in spring
It is growing and green,
But what voice has called it
And where it has been,
Nobody, nobody knows!

Nobody knows
Any of those
Strange, secret things—
Scent of a rose,
Swell of the tide,
Light of a star—
Only in sleep
May we dream where they are
For nobody, nobody knows!

CYNTHIA JANE

(A MORAL TALE)

"But Lucinda May Spence
called her over the fence."

"MY DEAR," said her mother to Cynthia Jane,
"What is this that I see in your stocking?
A child of your years should be saddened to tears
By a sight so untidy and shocking."

"I will mend it at once," cried sweet Cynthia Jane,
All abashed at such sad dereliction—
But Lucinda May Spence called her over the fence
And—Alas! How too rare is perfection!

The darning-wool ball, found that day by the cat,
Shows the dear child *intended* to do it,
But, when sleep closed the game of Lucinda and Jane,
The stocking still lay where she threw it!

Swift punishment came in a terrible dream
Of rude boys who, laughing and mocking,
Said again and again: "Look at Cynthia Jane,
Come to school *with a hole in her stocking!*"

THE CHRISTMAS QUEST

"LITTLE, lonely shepherd lad,
  Wherefore do you weep?"
"Sir, my father seeks a star;
  I must watch the sheep.

"Very lonely is the plain
  Very high the star—
Pray you, did you meet a lamb?
  One has wandered far."

"Nay, I met no wandering lamb,
  Little shepherd lad;
Is it but the lonely plain
  That has made you sad?"

"Sir, my father and the rest
Heard a heavenly sound;
I heard nothing, save the sheep
  Bleating all around!

"Wondrous things they heard and saw
  (Though the night was still)
I saw nothing, save my lambs
  White against the hill.

"Light was on my father's face
When he went away,
Fain I, too, had sought the star,
But he bade me stay.

" 'This high thing is not for you,
Who art but a lad,'
Said my father—that is why
I at heart am sad."

"Nay, my little shepherd lad,"
(Sweet the stranger smiled)
"When your father finds the star
He will find—a Child!"

THE LOST THOUGHT

THERE was a thought that through my mind
  Sped with a whirling glow,
It was more wild and beautiful
  Than other thoughts I know—
Oh, much more beautiful and wild
  Than thoughts which come and go!

It rose within me like a dawn
  That hides a singing bird,
It left an echo of a song
  Sweeter than songs I've heard—
Oh, sweeter far than any song
  My ears have ever heard.

All day I've searched inside my mind—
  Sometimes it almost seemed
I caught an echo and a glow,
  But mother says I dreamed—
Oh, I should like to dream again
  If 'twas that thought I dreamed!

OUTSIDE

"But what if I should scare some elf—Outside?"

When the night fire flares up red
  Into the chimney wide,
And I am s'posed to be in bed,
  I like to slip and hide
Behind the back of father's chair
And, when they quite forget I'm there,
I like to think
Of how the night is black as ink
  Outside!

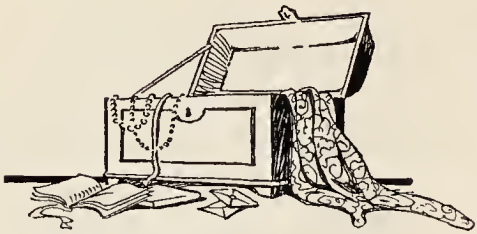
THE SHINING SHIP

The poplar trees down in the park,
  All day so stiff with pride,
Stand shivering inside the dark
  Quite limp and terrified—
I'd like to call out "Boo!" beneath,
And listen to their chatt'ry teeth,
But—I don't know—
To do it I should have to go
  Outside!

Our black cat with her tail all still
  Is watching, yellow-eyed,
Something beyond the window-sill
  That no one else has spied.
Soon she will go with padding feet
Out through the door and down the street.
I think she knows
What she won't tell—except to those
  Outside!

Of course there aren't witches now
  (What was that voice that cried?)
I don't mind witches anyhow
  (Was that the wind that sighed?)
For two brass pins I'd run around
The house and through the croquet ground—
I'm brave myself—
But what if I should scare some elf
  Outside?

YESTERDAY



Ah, how I wish I knew
Where Yesterday has gone—
  If I could find its track
  I'd run and bring it back—
  It was a lovely, glor'us day,
  And then it went away!

Perhaps I might find, too,
My little playmate, John—
  He's left and lost somewhere,
  And maybe it is *there!*
  Maybe, he played so late
  Today just couldn't wait!

TODAY

It is so nice to have Today
A pleasant little place to play,
With no way in and no way out,
And shining windows all about,
And things just going to begin,
All peeking out and peeking in!

TOMORROW

I wonder where Tomorrow hides?
I know that it must be
Upon the other side of Night
(The side I cannot see)
I try so hard to get there first,
Before it slips away,
But, every, every time I wake,
Tomorrow is Today!

THE MERMAID

COME hither, little Millicent, and sit upon my knee,
I have a curious tale to tell of strange things and the sea—
Strange is the land, my Millicent, but stranger is the sea!

What happened was in Danger Bay, in sight of Cape Farewell,
A brisk young storm came breezing up with a ginger-colored swell—
You never know how hard 'twill blow with a ginger-colored swell!

The bosun piped all hands on deck, the which to shorten sail,
When what d'you think we saw adrift in the teeth of that whistling gale?
Why—a young mermaid, that had got mislaid, alone in that nasty gale!

Now it wasn't a easy thing to do, but I'm wishful to record
By a pretty bit of seamanship we got that gal aboard—
We tacked a bit and slacked a bit and hauled her safe aboard.

Yet never a "thank ye!" did we get for not a word
said she,
All dripping on the dripping deck as graceful as may be,
As graceful as a cat that has no fear of what may be.

Strange seaweeds wrapped her like a cloak; her arms
were chill and bare,
Her eyes shone bright as drownèd gems behind her wet,
gold hair—
As lights half seen, through water green, they glimmered
through her hair!

The salt lay on her parted lips like rime on coral red
But nothing did she answer to a single word we said—
No word at all to aught or all of anything we said!

Then spoke the Captain bluff and brief, though he
shuffled where he stood,
"Maybe a dish o'tea—or two—would do the lady good—
A dish o' tea, with rum," said he, "does anybody good!"

The mermaid's eyes turned greener still and, all at once
she smiled,
No innocenter smile could be, not even on a child—
It almost seemed that we had dreamed and that she
was a child!

But as we wondered, smiling back, no one knew
whence nor how
A terrible great wave arose and smote us on our bow—
Rose like a hill, stood stiff and still, and fell upon our
bow!

So—that's the tale, small Millicent, of happ'nings that
befell
Poor sailormen of which I am the last one left to tell—
The last and lonely only one that's left alive to tell!

For you must know, what we knew not—before that
ill-starred trip—
Mermaids are pleasant to the eye but fatal to a ship—
Oh, lovely they, with waves at play, but doom unto
a ship!

SKIPPING SONG

"Skip on your toes if you want to skip right."

SKIPPETY skip, skippety skip!
Under and over, with never a slip,
Pepper and salt, pepper and salt!
Over and under with never a halt—
  That's how it's done—
  Isn't it fun?
And isn't skipping easy?

Skippety skip, skippety skip!
Hold the rope slackly, give it a flip,
Shut your lips tight, make your feet light,
Skip on your *toes* if you want to skip right—
  Hold your head straight—
  Isn't it great
That skipping is so easy?

Skippety skip, skippety skip!
Steady, now, steady!—ah, that was a slip!
Don't watch your *feet,* count every beat—
Skipping will make you both nimble and neat—
  One hundred and one?
  Very well done!
  And *isn't* skipping easy?

REALITY

"While I am just a little girl
With straight brown hair that will not curl!"

Oh, it is nice to lie in bed
With a fat pillow for my head
And ironed sheets, so straight and white,
And little flickery bits of light
Chased by long shadows on the wall,
Like goblin children playing ball!

I have such nice thinks in my head,
The thinks I save to think in bed,
Curious things!—like knights and kings
And magic birds with golden wings,
White cats that talk instead of purr—
A Princess, too—*and I am her!*

But when night brings another day
And breakfast comes and school and play—
I can't feel sure about that cat,
And kings wear black coats and a hat,
While I am just a little girl
With straight, brown hair that will not curl!

THE WOOD-VOICE

WOULD you learn of the Forest?
Its tears and its laughter—
  The lore of the trail
  Where the sunlight is pale
And the shadows creep after?
Be still, then, and listen,
All you who are seeking,
For 'tis the hushed voice
Of the forest that's speaking!
"I live in the trees—
I am always there, singing,
My song has no end
As it knew no beginning.
Some call me the Wind,
Some, the Wind's-Little-Brother—
I am the Wood-voice,
Neither one nor the other—
The Wind is from far
And he sings of great spaces,
I am small and I sing
Of the dim, woody places.
In my song is the note
Of the ferns and the mosses

That shrink in the shade
Of the Maple that tosses
Free arms far above—
And that note from the thicket,
Insistent and clear,
Is the tiny wood-cricket!—
Hush! Bend a quick ear,
Do you catch a tone falling
So faint, yet so sweet?
'Tis the forest brook, calling,
As, ceaseless, it slips
Through the tangle above it
To linger awhile
With the flowers that love it.
Look deep in its heart—
There the ghost-leaves are lying
In that strange other life
Which they enter by dying—
Step soft—you will hear
Them still whisper together
Of the wind and the sun
And the sweet summer weather—

. . . . . .

"And now a new note!
(Few, if any, who hear it
Know 'tis aught save a branch
And the wind passing near it!)

THE SHINING SHIP

'Tis the tall-standing pine
Who, in whispers, engages
A spruce bending near,
And the secrets of ages
Pass soft overhead!
Hush! Be still; you will hear them—
Nor fear to believe
Since all Heaven is near them!"

Would you learn of the Forest
Its tears and its laughter?
  Go follow the trail
  When the sunlight lies pale
And the shadows creep after!

EPITAPH FOR A STRAY

Quite a nice dog is laid below,
His name nobody seemed to know—
If any of his folks pass by,
He was a dog with one blind eye.
The other one was not quite new
But always saw enough for two;
And, though both ears were badly bit,
He never seemed to think of it;
Nor did he mind his crooked leg—
He used it to sit up and beg—
In color he was rather fair
(Though darker where he had most hair.)
His way with other dogs was mild,
While, as for cats—he merely smiled!
His was a heart too kind to bite—
He only let you *think he might!*
So, when he died, it was a shame
No one could call him by his name—
For such a dog, it seemed too sad—
We were the only folks he had!

LOST SUMMER

WHITHER are you fled
  Summertime and roses?
Are you really dead
  As the world supposes?
Or in some lone place
Where no footstep passes,
Do you hide your face
  In the scented grasses?

Sleeping, do you dream
  All your brief life over,
Hear the rippling stream,
  Smell the budding clover?
Dreaming, do you fall
  Into deeper slumber,
Caring not at all
  How the seasons number?

Or when April's breeze
  Sets the spring's green fire
Leaping through the trees,
  Will the old desire
Stir in joyous pain?
  As the circle closes
Will you wake again
  Summertime and roses?

BELLS

I HEAR the bells ring every day,
With voices large and round,
But when they ring on Sunday
They have a Sunday-sound.
Nobody seems to know just why—
I think perhaps the air,
So full of shining emptiness,
Is glad to have them there.

THE THREE KNIGHTS

(OLD GAME)

"HERE come three knights
All out of Spain
A-courting for
Your daughter Jane."
But one is dwarfed and one is old
And one has cruel lips and cold!

"My daughter Jane
Is yet too young
To understand
Your flattering tongue."
The one with cruel lips drew near
And laid pale hands upon my dear!

"Be she young,
Or be she old,
For her beauty
She must be sold."
He wore a long plume and a sword
And no one there durst speak a word!

. . . . . .

But, oh, his gold, when they were wed
Was not as golden as her head—
And never, though I sail to Spain,
Shall I behold my daughter Jane!

EVERYBODY UP

Madam April woke one morning
Feeling fresh and sprightly,
Saw a robin strutting round,
Touched the bare earth lightly—

Warm beneath dead leaves and bracken
Sleepers without number
Felt her touch and tried to rise,
Shaking winter from soft eyes,
Still in love with slumber.

Snowdrop, daffodil and crocus,
Wakened willy-nilly,
Scrambled out without their caps,
Found it pleasant—but perhaps
Just a trifle chilly!

In the coppice pussy-willows,
Hooded, grey and furry,
Heard the prisoned brooklet shout:
"I'm awake! please let me out!—"
Heard the frog croak "Hurry!"

Mother trees, protesting, murmured
"Why is youth so daring?
I can't keep my buds in bed—
They will catch cold-in-the-head,
After all my caring!"

No one listened—youth as ever,
Needed none to warn her—
Every growing, living thing
Stood tip-toe—and just then, Spring
Came around the corner!

COMPENSATIONS

"An' when the sleigh went scootin' past their door
With Jess an' me
They blubbered till they froze the window pane
An' couldn't see."

THERE's goin' to be a Chris'mas-tree next door!
Jess an' me know;
We saw them buyin' candles to the store—
An't must be so!

Ma says the Joneses folks is awful proud,
An' so you see,
Their little boy an' girl don't play around
With Jess an me.

THE SHINING SHIP

When me and Jess make snow-forts in the street,
They sit an' stare
Outen their windows, but they never come—
They wouldn't dare!

An' when we made that big terboggan-slide,
They bawled, I bet,
When their ma told them, No, they couldn't play,
Fear they'd get wet!

An' oh, that day when all the street was ice!
And we'd begin
An' slide fer half a mile, their ma she said
They must stay in!

An' when the sleigh went scootin' past their door,
With Jess an' me,
They blubbered till they froze the window-pane,
An' couldn't see.

But now they're goin' to have a really show—
A Chris'mas tree—
An' there ain't been no invertation come
Fer Jes an' me!

Ma says that if she felt so bad because
She couldn't go
She'd *see their old tree farther'* fore she'd let
Them upstarts know!

A GARDEN MYSTERY

"But when the seeds woke up—guess what?
They'd got all changed around in bed."

I HAVE a garden all my own,
I digged it with my little spade;
I hoed it crumbly with my hoe
And, when it was all nice and made,
I put long rows of seed to bed
(Tucking them in so snug and tight)
And gave them each a bed-time drink,
In case it shouldn't rain at night.

Then, every morning, I ran quick
To see if they had come awake,
To tidy up their beds, and draw
New bed-quilt patterns with my rake.
I did not poke them once! I did
Exactly like the seedman said,
But when the seeds woke up—guess what?
They'd got all changed around in bed.

They sprawled all over everywhere!
Some were so squeezed they nearly died,
One had a whole row to itself
And some had tumbled quite outside.
Not one was where I tucked it in—
Now, wasn't that the strangest thing?
It couldn't have been me, because
I made the rows quite straight with string.

They must have done it all themselves
But *why* they did it no one knows—
Unless perhaps they felt the cold
And huddled up beneath the clothes?
Or p'r'aps they had a nawful fight,
Or p'r'aps were scratched up by our cat,
Or p'r'aps my rake—*Oh, goodness me;*
I wish I hadn't thought of that!

THE EXPLORER

"Little Billy Wilson meant
To find a big, new continent.

LITTLE Billy Wilson ran
Away from home to be a man—
It took so long to grow up tall
By measuring against a wall,
"I just can't simply wait, that's all!"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

THE SHINING SHIP

Little Billy Wilson meant
To find a big, new continent—
No parents surely should forbid
To find one like Columbus did?
"*They ought to be quite in'trested!*"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

Little Billy Wilson made
Provision for his escapade
With one large slice of buttered bread—
He wished he'd made it two instead,
"*For travellers should be well-fed!*"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

When Little Billy Wilson had
Eaten the bread he grew quite sad,
The sadness mostly seemed to be
Halfway between his chin and knee—
"*I really should have made it three!*"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

Little Billy Wilson paused
And thought of all the grief he'd caused;
"How very sad Mamma will be
When she finds out there isn't me—
Besides there may be buns for tea!"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

Little Billy's parents kind,
Did not quite understand his mind,
And so they never really knew
Just what he ran away to do—
"*Nobody knows, 'cept me and you!*"
Said Little Billy Wilson.

BUGLES

It used to be
That, when I heard the bugle call,
I saw long ranks of soldiers sway
To battle music, brave and gay,
And banners flaunting on a wall;
But now I see—
Just Harry when he went away.

Harry was tall,
Taller than Pa (Pa didn't mind)
And just 'bout twice as tall as me,
All straight like our young poplar tree—
I liked him. He was awful kind;
Sometimes he'd call,
"Here, young 'un—hold this gun for me!"

It seems to me
That bugles have got changed somehow.
It used to be to hear one play
Would make me light and glad all day,
Playing at wars and fights—but now
I only see
Our Harry when we went away!

ADVENTURERS

When winter still is in the air
And not a green leaf anywhere,
There are great flocks of birds that wing
Over our town to find the Spring.

I often wonder what they know,
And how they find out where to go—
Perhaps, because they're up so high,
They see Spring somewhere in the sky.

If I could fly the way they do,
I would make haste to find Spring, too—
I'd pull her gently by the hand
And bring her back to my own land.

INSIDE EYES

When I am fast asleep at night
And both my eyes are shut up tight,
I have two *inside* eyes which see
Another world made just for me!

All the fine things I long to do,
And am not ever able to,
Are possible and easy, quite,
In this strange world I see at night—

Here there are doors that never lock,
And toys that run about and talk,
And roads that wind up like a stair
To where there's nothing but the air!

Here Rover, who's a dog by day,
Is changed in such a jolly way
Into a *person*—maybe he
Has inside eyes the same as me?

Next day we never say a word
About the things we've seen and heard,
But Rover winks at me and I
Wink back at him—and both know why!

Nurse won't believe that I can fly—
  She says I must not even try—
But Rover knows I rise with ease
  Above the tallest poplar trees.

Light as a cloud I float about
  And other little clouds come out
To play with me—and when I fall
  I do not bump my head at all.

One night the queerest wood I found
  Where dancing trees went circling round,
And when they saw that I was me
  They bowed as friendly as could be—

Oh, it is full of fine surprise
  This land I see with inside eyes,
And everything's so bright—'twould seem
  That waking up must be a dream!

THE GIFT RING

" 'Twould be fine to be rich
But a maid must have beauty."

There's a leprecaun green
Making shoes for a fairy
Down there by the hawthorn
(So quiet and all!)
But if I can catch him—
It's difficult, very,—
Sure he'll give me a gift-ring,
With no words at all!

And if that gift-ring
Should have three wishes in it
I'd have the whole world
At my elbow and all—
But if one gift were there
And my choosing must win it
Why, the way I'd be wishing
I don't know at all!

'Twould be fine to be rich—
But a maid must have beauty,
And health is a good wish
That's lucky for all—
To be asking for goodness
Is surely a duty—
Och! there's *four* things I've thought
With no thinking at all!

So if the gift-ring
Had but one gift for choosing
What with health, wealth and beauty
And goodness and all—
I'd be feeling so sad
For the gifts I'd be losing
That the gift I would get
Would be no joy at all!

THE DIAMOND

My sister said she knew
Where a great diamond grew—
It was so far away
We walked most all a day,
Until I felt inside
Like I had come untied,
And both my feet got slow
And hard to lift, but, oh,
Diamonds are dancing things
That shine in golden rings
And fair princesses wear
Their brightness in their hair—
No way could be too far
To go where diamonds are!

. . . . . .

And then, my sister said
It was a joke, and led
Down to a railroad track,
With rails all dull and black
Criss-crossing in a maze,
Where trains go different ways—
"That is the diamond!" sister said.
Well—she'll be sorry when I'm dead!

ANNE-ALONE

ANNE-ALONE has a house
Without any garden—
Squirrels hide their nuts there
With never a "Pardon!"
None ever call
At Anne-alone's house,
Those who come *stay,*
Even the field mouse!

There's plenty of room
For, with the door wide,
No one can tell
Outside from inside
You can sit on the roof—
All the birds do it—
They fly all around
And they fly right through it.

Anne-alone doesn't mind,
She likes their chatter.
Whenever a guest leaves
He goes away fatter—

But, should a boy come,
Somebody warns her,
And the house *isn't there*
But around the corner!

Of course you can guess
What Anne-alone's house is?
And, if you should watch
As still as a mouse is,
One day you may see
Anne-alone—but I doubt it,
She doesn't like boys
And that's all about it!

MANNERS

When I sit down, all clean and bright
Before the breakfast table, white,
With honey in a shining dish,
I'm most as good as I could wish—
For honey-comb and toast that curls
Are very good for little girls—
I never push my plate away,
Like the twins did the other day,
I never cry and say, "I won't!"
For I like honey, and they don't.

(2)

When mother has friends in to tea
I'm as polite as I can be,
I pass the sandwidges and cake
And never count how much they take—
Even if they take three or four
I always say, "Please have one more,"
(The twins would say, as like as not,
"My, don't you eat a nawful lot!")
I never even look—for they
May ask me out to tea someday!

THE EMPTY HOUSE

"A neighbor's boy declares to me
That the house is as full as a house can be."

THE old house stands in a pasture lot,
Battered and boarded and quite forgot.
Its door-sills yawn and its windows stare,
It's a long, long time since folk lived there—
Yet a neighbour's boy declares to me
That the house is as full as a house can be!

The Wind lives up on the topmost floor,
(Has lived there fifteen years and more)
And every night that he stays at home
You can hear him practice his saxophone—
Long-drawn-out notes with a sobbing swell
Are bits which he does extremely well.

The Sun has a lease of the southern side,
Its climbing vines are his special pride,
For, like many another travelling-man,
He gardens a bit wherever he can—
A first-class tenant, always bright
And never known to be out at night.

In the cool, north suites across the hall
You might think that nobody lived at all,
But their rents are paid, most punctually,
By the Field-Mouse, Limited, Company—
The "limited" means, as no doubt you've guessed,
Not more than twenty to a nest!

The kitchen flat, though somewhat bare,
Is a busy place for the Bees live there.
"The Busy Bees" is their business sign—
I'd rather it were theirs than mine!
For the gold they add to their honeyed store,
Is never enough, they must gather more.

Do you see that hole in the pantry floor?
It is Mr. Chipmunk's cellar door—
He is down there now, in a dreadful fuss,
For he knows no good of the likes of us,
And his knowledge of life leads him to fear
That nuts aren't safe with a boy too near—

In the wide west porch with its crumbling dome,
Live the Misses Bird, who were "not at home"—
They never are though you stay and stay,
But they come right back when you go away—
"It's because they are very shy, you see,"
The neighbor boy explained to me.

We wandered back through the swinging gate,
Where the path and the highway separate,
And the sign "To Let" was plainly seen,
Above the lilac's dusty green,
And I wondered what the tenants thought—
An empty house? Well, empty of what?

THE MIRACLE

THREE small seeds, as dry as rust,
Lie upon the sun-warmed dust—
Though you pierce their hardness through
Nothing will peep out at you;
Though you crush them, you will see
Nothing being or to be—

Yet, safe hidden from your eyes,
In one seed a great tree lies,
From whose branches, springing tall,
Birds shall send their mating call,
Nor shall wood-man rob its shade
Till new centuries be made.

This brown kernel, hard and sweet,
Holds a spear of springing wheat,
Which, when one brief summer's done,
Counts a score where now is one,
So that in your hand lies curled
Fields of gold to span the world.

This third seed, a tiny thing,
Hides the rose that poets sing,
Tender leaves which softly part,
Freeing from their crimson heart
All the gathered fragrance shed
By a million gardens dead—

"Three brown seeds that soon will be
Fruit and flower and a tree!"

See, the rain with padding feet,
Turns the warm dust dark and sweet,
Hiding all, that none may tell
Earth's most lovely miracle—
Three brown seeds that soon will be
Fruit and flower and a tree!

SONG OF THREE KINGS

Three kings went forth to greet a King,
(O long ago and far!)
On three high camels in a string,
Their only guide a star.
They bore rich robes and golden rings
And myrrh and frankincense and things
Such as are suitable for kings.
(O long ago and far!)

Through lands all dark with sleep they rode
(O long ago and far!)
By little lanes of light that showed
The pathway of the star.
But nothing did the three kings say
Till they were far and far away
And, weary, the kind camels lay.
(O long ago and far!)

Gold was the sand they rested on,
(O long ago and far!)
Said one, "Our questing ends anon—
Behold, how near the star!

THE SHINING SHIP

O Sirs, this King we ride to find
Moves in strange glory through my mind,
Resistless, terrible as wind."
(O long ago and far!)

"Friend, say you so?" with secret smile
(O long ago and far!)
The second searcher scanned awhile
The portent of the star.
"To me," he mused, " 'twould seem more right
That He whose star fills heaven with light
Should rule by wisdom, not by might."
(O long ago and far!)

The third king, thoughtful, paused to sup
(O long ago and far!)
Sweet water from a jade-green cup,
Serene beneath the star.
"High Sirs," said he, "it would appear
Wisdom hath ruled before—and fear—
If these be all, what seek we here?"
(O long ago and far!)

The quick wind blew the lifting sands
(O long ago and far!)
In golden rain against their hands,
Hiding awhile the star.

Again he spake: "Earth wearies of
Wise endless words and mailèd glove—
What of a King whose rule were love?"
(O long ago and far!)

The swift wind died, the soft sand fell,
(O long ago and far!)
The camels knelt with tinkling bell,
With glory blazed the star;
And no word more did any say,
But rose and rolled their mats away,
For it was dawn—and Christmas Day!
(O long ago and far!)

I WONDER AT THE WIND

"I wonder if he's lonely when
We shut him out at night?"

I WONDER at the Wind—he lifts
  My kite so high and free,
Then tears its string from out my hand
  To tangle in a tree!

Does he *like* people, do you think?
  I never seem to know
Whether he wants to be a friend
  Or tries to be a foe.

He fans my bonfire on the beach
'Till red flames leap and shout—
But every single chance he gets
He blows my candle out.

He'll give most any bird a ride,
To rest its tired wing,
Then turn and tumble down its nest
And laugh like anything!

Sometimes he seems so kind—when I
Was late for school to-day,
He blew me to the very door—
Then snatched my cap away!

I see him fill the idle sail
And guide it with his hand—
But what of all those ships that lie
In driftwood on the sand?

He has quite diff'rent voices, too—
A whisp'ry, singing sound
And then a scolding roar that makes
The trees shake in the ground.

My mother says, "It's just the wind,
Son, close the windows tight"—

I wonder if he's lonely when
We shut him out at night?

Yet, when I left the door ajar
At supper —just in case—
He rushed right down the garden path
And slammed it in my face.

Of course that may have been just fun,
Because when I was ill
He came so quietly and cool
Across the window-sill,

And all the room was lovely with
The scent that lilacs send—
'Twas just as if he'd called to leave
A bouquet for a friend!

TRIBUTE

"Oh, I should like to buy the moon out of the sky."

My mother's face is fair—
Soft darkness is her hair,
Like folded wings it lies
Above her shining eyes.

The breeze that passes by
Is like my mother's sigh—
Between my hands I press
Sweet perfumes from her dress.

THE SHINING SHIP

Her smile is swift and gay;
It comes and slips away,
And I can never find
Where it has hid behind.

Her feet along the ground
Make a most lovely sound!
And when my mother's there
No fear is anywhere—

Oh, I should like to buy
The moon out of the sky
And place it in her hand
So she would understand!

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About the Autho

Isabel Ecclestone Mackay (1875-1928) lived for many years in Vancouver, and is usually regarded as a Western author. She was, however, born in Woodstock, Ontario; she was the daughter of Donald McLeod MacPherson and Priscilla Ecclestone. In 1895 she married Mr. P. J. Mackay.

Her verse, short stories, sketches, and serials appeared widely in English, Canadian, and United States Magazines. She was the author of several novels, the most popular being, "Up the Hill and Over," a story of Ontario Village life. On two occasions she won the $100 prize for the best poems in the Annual Historical Poem Contest conducted by the Toronto Globe. The prize-winning poems were "Marguerite de Roberval," and "The Passing of Cadieux." Prior to the publication of "The Complete Poems of Isabel Ecclestone Mackay," two volumes were issued: "The Shining Ship and Other Verse for Children," and "Fires of Driftwood."